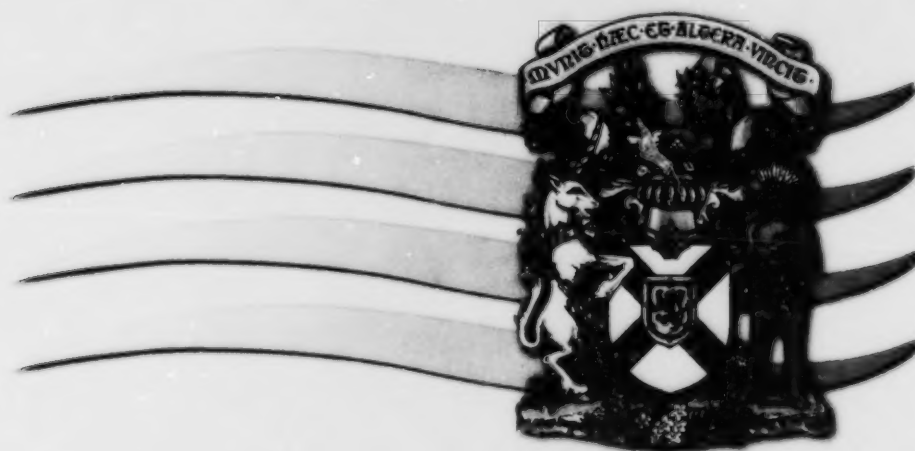


The Course Ahead



for the fiscal year 2000-01
PROVINCE OF NOVA SCOTIA



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Designed and published in conventional and electronic form by
Communications Nova Scotia



PRINTED IN CANADA

ISBN: 0-88871-616-8

The Course Ahead



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THE PREMIER
HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA
B3J 2T3

Message from Premier John Hamm

The year 2000 will be a year of transition for the government of Nova Scotia. Just about eight months ago, Nova Scotians honoured my party with their trust. They voted for change. Since assuming office, the need for fundamental change in the way government works has become increasingly clear to me and to my cabinet colleagues.

The government of Nova Scotia, as we know it today, was designed during and for the 1970s and 1980s. Little wonder that design isn't meeting the needs of Nova Scotians in this, the first year of the new millennium. It is a government staffed by professional, dedicated public servants, who are too often frustrated by inefficiency and by structural and cultural impediments that stand in their way as they strive to serve their clients, the people of Nova Scotia. Our government is determined to remove the impediments, reshape the bureaucracy, and focus our attention on meeting the priority needs of Nova Scotians.

We are dedicated to protecting and improving those core services Nova Scotians need, and care about most—health care when and where people need it and education that prepares young Nova Scotians to succeed in a world where knowledge holds the key.

We are convinced that Nova Scotia's best days are just over the horizon. To get there, Nova Scotians need a government they can depend on. A government that understands its responsibility to live within its means. A government that has the ability to respond to real human need. A government that understands its only purpose is to serve the people.

On the pages that follow, our government sets a clear, new direction for government. Our objectives are equally clear: To improve on the services Nova Scotians care most about. To ensure that we treat all Nova Scotians and all regions of the province fairly. To give the taxpayers value for their money. To improve accountability to Nova Scotians for how that money is spent on their behalf.

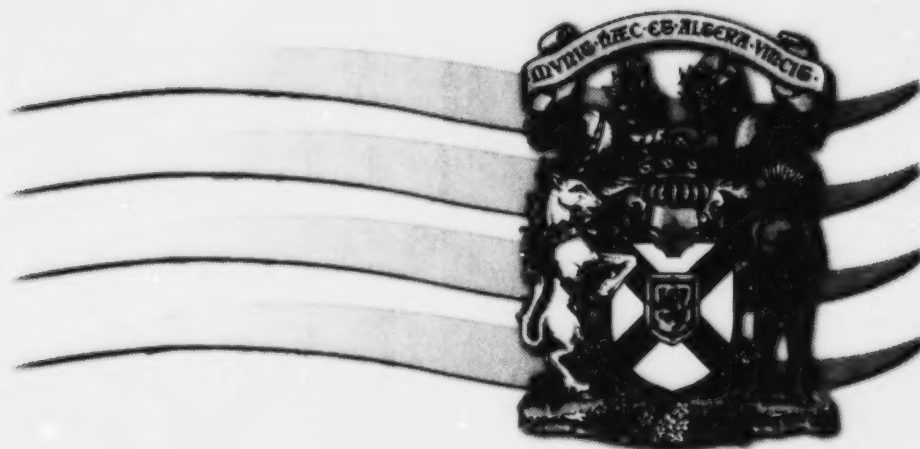
We will keep faith with Nova Scotians; fulfil our commitments. And first among those commitments is a government that always works for them. The new direction we now embark on is in pursuit of that goal.

Sincerely,
John Hamm



Printed on paper that
contains recycled fibre

PART ONE



The Government BUSINESS PLAN

The Course Ahead



Summary

The Course Ahead presents a plan to take Nova Scotia in a new direction. It offers a vision to seize economic and social prosperity and to resolve the financial and public services dilemma so that the promise of the province can be realized.

This government is different. It has a vision that is guided by four principles:

- quality of service
- fairness to regions and people
- value for money
- accountability to Nova Scotians

The structural changes encompassed in this plan will be implemented in 2000-01. The principles and objectives articulated here will guide us throughout the government's mandate. The plan will be renewed each year in the form of a corporate business plan and high-level goals for government. Those goals will serve as the blueprint for departmental business plans, which are the foundation of the budget planning process.

This government is committed to an open and transparent accountability framework through which it will

- report annually to Nova Scotians on progress in achieving its goals from a government-wide (corporate), as well as departmental, perspective
- reassess and adjust its goals as needed to direct departmental business planning
- state its results in clear language.

This new approach begins with:

- government understanding its role
- restructuring government to focus on core services and improve overall delivery.

Government will lay a foundation for the future by focusing on four corporate goals:

- education as the foundation
- accountable and accessible health care
- creating a strategic environment for business
- moving to self-sufficiency.



The Course Ahead



Introduction

Nova Scotians from one end of the province to the other have sent a powerful message to their government that things must change. Government must change to become more accountable and open. Government must change the way it works to better serve its citizens; to guarantee access to improved health care and quality education; and to ensure future generations inherit a province that can pay its own way. Nova Scotians are tired of talk. They want results.

This government welcomes the challenge presented by Nova Scotians. We believe Nova Scotia can and must be a province

- where each individual has the opportunity to thrive in a safe and secure environment
- where our children participate in world-class learning
- where communities preserve and promote the cultural and human values we all cherish
- where a healthy economic climate and our wealth of resources combine to provide opportunity for all.

We want to build a new Nova Scotia where the traditions of our past fuse with the opportunities of the present to forge a dynamic and exciting future.

Ask any mariner: charting any new course is never easy. In Nova Scotia's case, we must deal with the effects of years of deficit financing and debt growth, which allowed successive governments to mask the urgent need for real reform in programs and services. We have neglected critical economic opportunity in virtually every sector of endeavour. We have seen accountability and responsibility for spending and management erode. Our province has lacked both a defining vision for the future and a plan to help us achieve that vision. Our ship has been rudderless. We have been drifting.

Like the people of Nova Scotia, this government believes Nova Scotia can do better, if we have the courage to chart a new course.

In *The Course Ahead*, we present a plan that takes us in that new direction. It offers bold initiatives and dramatic change. We believe it maps the course we must chart as a province in order to seize the economic and social prosperity that our resources, our traditions, and our human strengths demand be ours. *The Course Ahead* commits us to resolve our financial and public services dilemma so that the promise of our province can be realized.

This is not a conventional business plan. A document describing the magnitude of change we will implement over the next year could not be conventional. Many of the business units of government—departments, agencies, secretariats—will change fundamentally in the next 12 months. For this reason, this document does not contain multi-year business plans and fiscal information for those units. We are committed to a more open and accountable planning process and will be issuing a mid-year update outlining the progress we have made. In subsequent years, a multi-year business plan for government will be prepared and released.

What Nova Scotians Expect: Consistent Principles for Government Business

For years, Nova Scotians have watched as economic opportunities funnelled into one or two geographic regions of the province. They watched government costs increase without seeing any corresponding value in services. They watched health care devour an ever-increasing share of their tax dollars while the waiting lines grew longer. Nova Scotians expect better from their government, and their government is ready to respond. Four key principles will serve as the cornerstone of our decision making in the days ahead. These principles will help us get to where we want to be.

Quality of Service

First and foremost, Nova Scotians expect access to quality service. Whether they live in Canso or Sydney or Shelburne, Nova Scotians have a right to expect timely, effective service from their government. In *The Course Ahead*, our government will outline plans to integrate like services and use technology to improve access to communities across Nova Scotia. We will focus our attention on providing the core services every Nova Scotian has the right to expect. We will be designing easy-to-understand outcome measures and service standards so everyone will see how we are doing in meeting our goals.

Fairness to Regions and to People

Nova Scotians want to be assured that as government changes those most affected will be treated with compassion and fairness. They expect that changes will impact fairly across the regions of our province and that, wherever possible, new opportunities will be created for those parts of Nova Scotia that have not prospered. In *The Course Ahead*, our government will lay out its commitment to fairness and equality of opportunity. As we explore new ways of doing business, we will ensure that all regions have an opportunity to share in new opportunities. Where you live must no longer determine what you can be.

Value for Money

Like our New England cousins, Nova Scotians have long understood the value of a dollar. They expect their government to understand that as well. Increasingly, the old ways of doing business are becoming more costly and less cost-effective. If we are to spend taxpayers' dollars wisely, we must change those processes and focus our attention and our resources on true priority needs. In *The Course Ahead* our government will lay out its plans to reshape and streamline government services so that we can make the most of every dollar we spend.

Improved Accountability for Spending

Many governments have talked about value for money; this government will deliver. We will do so through a series of measures designed to track spending and account for it publicly, by holding senior officials accountable for performance and by introducing service and spending standards for agencies and organizations that receive provincial funds. We will be developing new ways to report our progress more often and with greater accuracy. *The Course Ahead* lays out our first benchmarks in this process.

What Nova Scotians Want: A Government That Sets a Clear Direction

The consistent application of the principles outlined above are not ends in themselves. They are simply tools that will help us reach our ultimate destination: a fiscally stable Nova Scotia where everyone can reach financial self-reliance and social well-being. In *The Course Ahead* this government will outline plans to focus more strategically on achieving a healthy Nova Scotia in the broadest and truest meaning of the term. We must all recognize that this new focus may mean profound changes in the role government has traditionally assumed in the lives of citizens. But, we all know that you cannot row and steer at the same time. Over the past few years governments have been

spending way too much time rowing the boat while neglecting the tiller. An economy badly out of kilter and a rotting social safety net are the result. It's time government assumed its proper role as a navigator. By creating the climate and the conditions for change, we can enable Nova Scotians to design and shape their future for themselves.

Since assuming office, and with help from employees, community groups, and citizens, our government has been examining every area of government activity. We are now in a position to implement some significant changes in what services we offer, in how we offer those services, and in how we organize ourselves to better serve Nova Scotians. We are redesigning the foundation of our operations in a way that will help us transform the culture of government in this province, and this change will resonate throughout every element of our work. **We will be a government that knows its place and a government that focuses on the basics.**

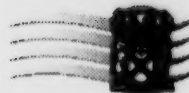
Nova Scotians cherish their history. They embrace the challenge and opportunity of their future. Education is the key if the people of this province are to achieve their goals and dreams. We will help Nova Scotians of every age prepare to take advantage of every opportunity by becoming the province of 'lifelong learning'. A province where our children can explore the world from their classrooms. A province where our universities and our community colleges provide young Nova Scotians with the skills they need to build a prosperous future for themselves and their families. A province where training is strategically linked to the needs of the economy. A province where the young and the not so young can find the support and encouragement to be the best they can be. **Education and lifelong learning will be the foundation on which we build a prosperous new Nova Scotia.**

Nova Scotians have watched with dismay as health care costs spiralled and the system grew less accountable for the huge sums spent on a burgeoning bureaucracy. Nova Scotians want a healthy province where they can access state-of-the-art care. But they want a health care system that is financially sustainable, too. Nova Scotians want a healthier province, where the focus is on primary care and prevention and where the troublesome barriers between services are swept away. **Creating an accountable and accessible health care continuum will be a major focus for this government.**

Statistics prove that the health of our economy is underpinned by a diverse array of small businesses that enrich every community. Unfortunately, those with the courage to develop business opportunities have too often faced a wall of government regulation, duplication, and time-consuming processes. Government has been a barrier to economic growth and prosperity, not a catalyst. **This government will cut red tape and create an economic climate that encourages business to achieve its full potential.**

Nova Scotians have a long tradition of helping their neighbours. Government must make sure that an effective social safety net is in place for those who need it. But we do not currently provide adequate support to help those in need acquire the skills they must have to find their way to greater self-reliance. Our legislation is complex, our regulations antiquated, and work with clients on developing career paths has been sporadic and unfocused. **This government is committed to helping Nova Scotians who are dependent on assistance make the transition to self-sufficiency and independence.**

The Course Ahead



A Government That Knows Its Role

Our province was built by strong men and women who forged livelihoods and created caring communities under sometimes trying circumstances. That rugged spirit of independence has never been lost, and many Nova Scotians have watched with growing concern the expansion of government regulation and intrusion into every area of endeavour. Costly bureaucracies and administration take precious dollars away from services and front-line support for critical programs like health care.

Beginning in this budget year we will be streamlining our government structure with the overall goal of providing better and more efficient services to Nova Scotians. We will be reducing the number of departments to eliminate costly management structures, and we will be grouping similar services together in more rational ways so we can focus on service delivery. These changes will take approximately one year to implement fully, but we are committed to offering Nova Scotians a smaller government in which the emphasis will be on a quality, efficient service. It will be a government that has a meaningful presence in every region of the province and a government that never forgets that its only purpose is to serve the people.

The steps we will take to improve services to Nova Scotians:

- Currently, the government of Nova

Scotia consists of 21 departments (although some are called secretariats or directorates), each with its own expensive arrangement of senior managers, deputy ministers, and minister's offices. Silos exist everywhere, making quality decisions and effective planning rare. In our new model, we will begin moving immediately to a maximum of 14 departments, which will be reorganized to group similar services to minimize duplication and overhead and concentrate our resources more strategically on providing service.

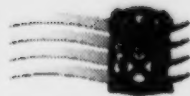
- Building the new continuum of care for seniors under the Department of Health is one positive step that will assure Nova Scotians that their requests for a single point of access to services have been heard. It's impossible to provide a seamless array of services and to make sure that clients receive the appropriate support when jurisdictions are split between two departments. People have talked for years about creating a single entry point for Home Care and Homes for Special Care. Our government makes that transition, effective April 1, 2000. This move makes good sense, whether you are a senior frustrated with the maze of application forms you must complete to obtain service or a taxpayer wondering why more and more tax dollars are spent on administration, not service.
- Throughout the comprehensive program analysis and options process,

programs and services that are good candidates for alternative service delivery methods have been identified. As we move to the new structure of government operations, business cases will determine services and programs to be out-sourced, privatized, or spun into special operating agencies. Experience has shown that a smart combination of these approaches will protect services, allow jobs to be transferred to the private sector, and ensure that rural communities have access to core programs—and greater access to the jobs associated with those programs. We also believe that in working more closely with Nova Scotia's 55 municipalities on identifying common service options, we will have the opportunity to serve the general public more effectively. We are committed to creating a leaner government, but one that thinks big about its responsibilities to the people and to the communities it serves. Meeting those two objectives will be a major part of the mandate of a new ministry, Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations: the new face of government across the province.

- Government will relocate some of its central office functions outside the metro area. Office towers in Halifax are not necessarily the best or most efficient way to serve rural Nova Scotians. Some services provided by government can and should have a

stronger presence in other regions. Decentralizing some government services will ensure that all regions of the province have access to opportunities and that the economic fabric of our rural communities will be protected.

- We have heard Nova Scotians talk about the work they want their government to do and we are committed to honouring their wishes. There are businesses that the government has no business in. A valuation study currently under way on Nova Scotia Resources Limited will determine whether it is appropriate at this time for the province to remain directly engaged in the oil and gas business. In order for government to effectively focus on its core business, its attention cannot be diverted by businesses best left to business.
- Over the next few months, we will also be moving aggressively to negotiate a private-sector management contract for our Signature Resorts. These resorts are important provincial assets, which must remain vital operations. Presently, provincial ownership may be required to meet that objective. However, there is no reason why they cannot be managed by experienced private-sector managers who have the know-how to assure maximum competitiveness and return to the taxpayers.

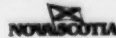
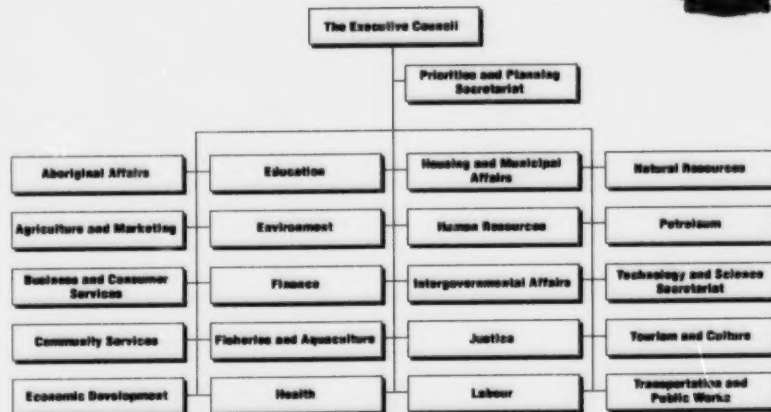
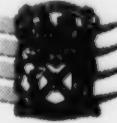


- Over the next few months, our public service will be getting smaller as we move to eliminate some discretionary programs and reshape how we deliver others. Our pledge is to preserve rural and regional service and to focus our reductions, as much as possible, on the administrative superstructure, which has grown alarmingly in the past few years. We will be rebuilding a service culture that places our customers and clients—the people of this province—at the head of the line. Ministers and deputies will be held accountable for making certain this occurs from top to bottom throughout their organizations. For the first time ever, our senior executives will be annually assessed to determine if they are fulfilling this objective.
- One essential role for government is ensuring accountability and responsibility for every tax dollar. More than 87 cents of every provincial tax dollar is transferred to other organizations or individuals. These include school boards, hospitals, health boards, and municipalities. The province will never achieve fiscal stability or strong program management until it finds a way to hold those agencies who receive provincial tax dollars more accountable for their expenditures. Over the next few months we will be introducing measures to launch us on the road to the more transparent and accountable system all

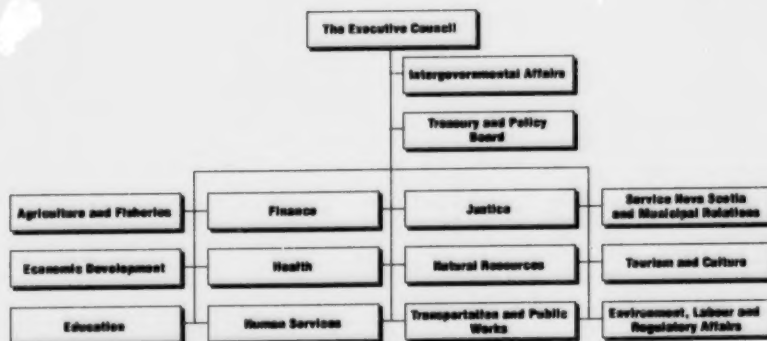
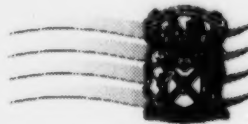
Nova Scotians have a right to expect. Moreover, we will be moving to an annual reporting on performance and accountability. Each fall, a companion publication, *Charting the Course: Where We've Been*, will show Nova Scotians clear and unambiguous outcome measures that will allow people to determine for themselves whether this government is living up to its ambitious agenda for change. We will be releasing the first *Charting the Course: Where We've Been* on October 1, 2000.

"A government that knows its place." The words come easy, but determination and commitment by many are required to live by them. This government is committed to transforming the system it inherited. There are many good public servants who are eager to do their best for the people they serve. For too long they have been sent mixed messages about restraint and profligacy. For too long they have not had the committed leadership to help them transform the culture and environment of their workplace so they can truly focus on the jobs that need to be done. The way ahead will not be easy, but if we are to achieve our goal—a secure Nova Scotia, where everyone can achieve financial independence and social well-being—we must be resolute in our determination to forge ahead with decisive change.

Current Organization



New Organization



The Course Ahead



Our Corporate Goals

Education as the Foundation

Successive governments have proclaimed their commitment to education and to the principles that lie behind lifelong learning. We are a government that is intent upon delivering results. Whether it be in the classroom, at the jobsite, or at the computer station, Nova Scotians deserve the best and the most competitive educational opportunities anywhere. At the same time, we are determined to make sure that the dollars spent on education reach the student. It is time to cut costly bureaucracy, eliminate duplication, and root out wasteful overhead.

It is essential that we introduce measures aimed specifically at reducing duplication and overhead at the Department of Education, school board, and university level. We believe Nova Scotians support the concept of fewer bureaucrats and more programs for our children and youth, and we aim to make sure that approach wins the day.

But that's only a beginning. In the days ahead, the government will be announcing a major initiative to develop, with Nova Scotians, a renewed commitment to education and the strategy to take us to the forefront of lifelong learning.

The steps we will take to achieve our goal:

- Research tells us that the early, formative years are when youngsters require the most interactive work with their teachers, and we are committed to initiatives that will maintain classroom student/teacher ratios for grades primary through six. We are committed to providing safe and healthy schools and will pursue a strong infrastructure upgrade over the coming year. For too long, the upkeep of our schools has been neglected to the detriment of teachers and students alike.
- We are asking school boards to begin some administrative right-sizing in line with that we have initiated within the province. Every dollar the board can save on administrative costs represents a dollar that can be spent on behalf of our children. We will be launching two pilot projects with existing school boards to develop a new model of service delivery that will let the boards focus their attentions on the provision of quality education to our children while making the province accountable for providing the appropriate level of administrative support.

- As part of our own commitment to eliminate duplication, we will be exploring options with our Atlantic Canada colleagues to determine where efficiencies and savings can be had by sharing more completely future initiatives on curriculum and policy development. In a similar vein, we will asking our Atlantic Canada partners to work with us in reshaping the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission (MPHEC) to better meet the needs of today. Much of the rationale behind the creation of the council is no longer valid, and it is time to assess the return on investment that our province receives for its contribution.
- The Nova Scotia Community College system is rapidly gaining an international reputation for the excellence and the strategic leadership it is showing in many key areas. We will be continuing to support the NSCC and will be asking that system to assume responsibility for the Nova Scotia School of Fisheries and Aquaculture. It makes sense to have all our schools administered under one umbrella so we can make best use of all the considerable resources for learning that are available within the province.
- On a per-capita basis, Nova Scotia has more universities than any other part of Canada. The concentration of so many diverse research facilities gives us the opportunity to create an R&D environment that is second to none. Our government is determined that this synergy will occur. To that end, we are asking universities in the Halifax area to work with us over the next two years to develop a plan to minimize administrative overlap and management costs so we can focus our attention on building strategic centres of excellence across the university system. We will be assisting universities with their capital commitments for this year, while we encourage them to reposition their long term planning to alumni and the private sector support. We believe it is government's role at the post-secondary level to focus on providing supports to students and to teaching programs, not to bricks and mortar.

Education and lifelong learning are the parallel tracks to a better future. Whether Nova Scotians live in Halifax or Yarmouth or Baddeck, everyone deserves access to the knowledge and training they require to lead healthy, productive and prosperous lives. This government is committed to making sure that all citizens from the very youngest to the most senior have the range of opportunities they require.



Accountable and Accessible Health Care

From one end of the province to the other, Nova Scotians have told us that they will no longer tolerate health care that is short on service and long on bureaucracy. Our move to District Health Authorities, which will be completed by November of this year, is a first step in returning important decision making over health issues to communities. As the Community Health Council model takes root across the province, we will be asking citizens to make some fundamental decisions about how local and regional grants to agencies are determined and about how the future course of health care services ought to be shaped.

The steps we will take to achieve our goal:

- Creating the seamless continuum for seniors programs is but a first step in what must be a fundamental reordering of service priorities. In a related move, the shift of Housing Services from the Department of Housing and Municipal Affairs to Community Services to form the new Human Services Department is intended to make access to those services easier for clients and more strategically supportive of both health and social services initiatives.
- Currently, a review of Mental Health Services is under way. It is evident that fundamental changes need to be made in the delivery of those services to adolescents and youth. This government is committed to moving toward a single window approach, where families in crisis will not be sent knocking on one door after another in order to get help. Over the next few months, both the departments of Health and Human Services will be working cooperatively on making these changes.
- The move to a Primary Care model signals a major shift in focus for this province. If we can deal with problems earlier—or perhaps even stop them from developing at all by good preventive medicine—we can save taxpayers money otherwise spent on costly institutional care and save patients the added difficulties of acute treatment. For this reason, we are moving the Sport and Recreation Commission to the Department of Health. We believe that the promotion of physical fitness and healthy recreation is an important component in the shift to a wellness model of health.

- At the same time, we must make certain that when our citizens become seriously ill they have access to the best care and treatments available. We are working with the Cancer Commissioner to create a regional centre of excellence. We expect that in collaboration with the Provincial Health Council, we will be able to develop the first-ever standards of care for Nova Scotia. This is an important first step in making sure that out citizens—regardless of whether they live in Digby or Dartmouth—can expect equity in access to services.
 - At the present time, the patient can make it home from the doctor's office faster than his or her medical information can be transmitted from the specialist or the laboratory to the family physician. We are delivering space-age care on a technology base that hasn't moved appreciably forward from the days of the quill pen. Working in concert with our sister provinces in Atlantic Canada, we are committed to building a new medical information technology system that will allow hospitals, physicians, and laboratories to share important patient information as quickly as it can be keyed into the system. This system will not be built overnight, but its development is essential if we are to manage cost, monitor practice standards, and provide better decision-making information to patients.
 - Our province has many tertiary care facilities that enjoy a national reputation—most clustered in the metro region. We will be asking them to work with us over the next two years to identify ways to reduce administrative duplication and achieve cost savings through shared efficiencies. Nova Scotians have told us that they care about the services provided to people, not about who calculates the payroll. With health care costs rising at a rate of 12 per cent year over year, we must achieve these savings if we are to make sure that critical health care services remain available. With collaboration and creativity we can surely reduce the administrative costs that at present constrain our capacity to fund direct service.
- For too long no one has had the courage to aggressively tackle the systemic issues that are jeopardizing our ability to protect the health of the people of our province. Yes, it is true that the federal government removed huge amounts of money from its transfers to provinces during the 1990s. But it has been all too easy to focus on that as justification to neglect other spiralling costs. These reasons include: no vision of primary care, no commitment to that vision, and no courage to tackle the growth of big health bureaucracies across the regions. This government has the vision and the courage to meet these challenges head on and to make sure that all Nova Scotians will receive the services they need, when and where they need them.

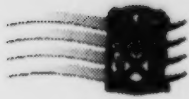
Creating a Strategic Environment for Business

Statistics tell us that small business creates more jobs in our province than any other sector. Whether it is the fledgling entrepreneur starting up an e-commerce enterprise in her basement, a family welcoming visitors to their bed and breakfast, or the young man creating world-class handmade furniture in his shop, these far-sighted Nova Scotians all have two things in common—the desire to succeed and the capacity to generate incomes and revenues within their communities. All too often, the maze of permits and licences they require is a major disincentive from the start. The confusing and costly barriers put in their way as they expand cause many to stay small, rather than growing to their full capacity. This is a tragedy, not only for those individuals, but also for those Nova Scotians who might otherwise have been offered a job and for those communities that might have profited from increasing tax revenues.

The steps we will take to achieve our goal:

- Our government will soon launch its Red Tape Reduction initiative. Over the course of the next few months, our commission will visit small business owners, consult with the public, and meet with anyone who has an interest in improving the business climate in this province. We are committed to implementing the recommendations of this commission as part of our ongoing determination to see government change from being an obstacle to being an enabler. As part of our plan for open and more accountable government, we will be tracking our success in reducing red tape in our annual accountability document, *Charting the Course: Where We've Been*.
- But eliminating red tape is just a start. Business has to have access to the tools it needs to do its job. That's why we are combining all registries—the Nova Scotia Business Registry, the Registry of Deeds, and the Registry of Personal Property—under the Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations (SNS) banner. No matter where you live in the province, you will be able to access SNS through a single window. As technology becomes increasingly less costly, access to much of the information and services you want will be available when you want it—not simply during regular business hours.

- We will soon be releasing our government's economic strategy framework. It is a document that will provide direction on where we need to focus our attention in the years ahead. We have the capacity to grow in the information technology and communications sector. In light of that, we have moved that important strategic piece from the Technology and Science Secretariat and linked it with INNOVAcorp and the Department of Economic Development.
- Our tourism growth has been extraordinary over the past few years, and we need to continue the momentum. Our new Department of Tourism and Culture is poised to begin some new partnerships with both the tourism and the cultural sectors. And as a result of restructuring, the new department will be assuming a new mandate: the promotion of provincial parks and beaches. When so many tell us they come to Nova Scotia for a peaceful vacation and our beautiful scenery, we believe this move makes solid economic and policy sense.
- As the offshore continues to develop, we need to make certain that we focus our attention on developing a strategy for Tier Two that will maximize Nova Scotian participation. Our government is now working on just such a strategy and will begin meeting with our partners to develop some common objectives and mutually agreed-upon time lines. We are well past the learning stage in the gas business. It is high time that we begin receiving our fair share of design and fabrication contracts and the high-paying jobs that go with them. Although the Nova Scotia Petroleum Directorate will remain a free-standing unit, we have tasked senior officials in both that agency and the Department of Economic Development to work out a joint plan to focus on bringing the strategic investment we need in this sector to our province.
- New industries are exciting and hold great potential, but we must never forget that the backbone of our province rests on the traditional resource industries. We are merging the Departments of Agriculture and Fisheries to build some synergy across strategic sectors such as aquaculture.



- Our commitment to silviculture remains strong, and the steady erosion of support to the forestry sector over the past few years will cease. Strategic investment in this sector benefits many rural communities and provides excellent seasonal employment. We are committed to ensuring that these benefits will continue into the future.

Moving to Self-Sufficiency

There are currently many Nova Scotians who are effectively shut out of the opportunities offered by our economy. Often lacking competitive job skills and supports such as child care, they are relegated to a life dependent on social assistance payments. It is a sobering statistic that the average education level of persons receiving assistance is grade 10 or less. Clearly these individuals and their families will never have a chance at independence unless they are provided with the training and support to prepare them for today's competitive job market.

This government has adopted the principle of self-sufficiency: support for those who require it, but a more strategic focus on job training and skills development for those who can make the transition from income assistance to the work force. This fundamental shift in approach is not the "quick fix" advocated by some, but it will provide an appropriate and humane bridge to move a large percentage of those on social assistance to greater self-sufficiency.

The steps we will take to achieve our goal:

- We will be reconfiguring the Department of Community Services into a new Department of Human Services. All housing services will be centred in this new department, so we can begin to create the synergy of social supports and options entailed in moving to the self-sufficiency model.
- We will be expanding our day-care resources for those who have opportunities to participate in training or employment but who have in the past been forced to forego those opportunities since they lacked affordable child care.
- We will be introducing new social assistance legislation that will replace the outdated and confusing acts that currently serve as barriers to common-sense decision making.

- The Department of Education will be placing a renewed emphasis on literacy skills and will develop a literacy check that will, once fully implemented, ensure that all graduates of our public school system can read and write at a fully functional level. Education and Human Services will be mandated to link training programs more effectively to better meet client needs.
- We will add four new sites to our existing network of Early Intervention Services so that children who need these important services can access them in their own regions.

The Course Ahead

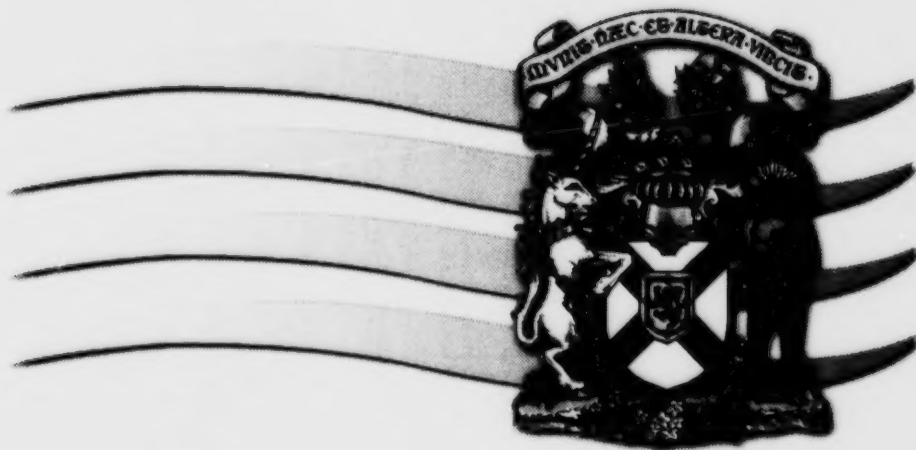


Conclusion:

The Way Ahead

Pursuing this ambitious course will not be easy. Nothing worthwhile ever is. Burdened by our debt and saddled with programs and services we can neither afford nor need, we have to take a bold first step. Setting aggressive budget targets aimed at seeing government finances back in balance in 2002-03 was simply the departure point. Now we must fundamentally transform the business we do, the way we do it, and the culture of service that supports it. These tasks won't be accomplished overnight, but they will be accomplished. Our future ability to provide for coming generations hangs in the balance. We must and will be accountable for our stewardship.

PART TWO



Departmental
PLANS

Note:

The content of the following departmental business plans for 2000-01 reflects the current organization of the Government of Nova Scotia. As government moves to implement its restructuring initiatives, the missions, strategic goals, core business functions, and priorities for 2000-01 outlined in the departmental business plans will devolved into the new organization of the Government of Nova Scotia described in Part I of *The Course Ahead*.

Agriculture and Marketing



Mission:

To encourage the development of a viable and sustainable agriculture and food industry for the betterment of Nova Scotians.

Strategic Goals

1. Agri-business development: encourage the competitiveness of the agriculture and food industry so new employment and income opportunities can be created.
2. Education and lifelong learning: provide leadership in the development of human resources for the agriculture and food industry and for rural communities.
3. Environment sustainability: foster an environmentally responsible and sustainable agriculture and food industry.

Core Business Functions

- Industry/farm development programs; income stabilization (safety net) programs; crop insurance; market and product research and development; regional agricultural development services; food safety education and inspection services; agriculture-focused financial lending and planning; applied production and environmental research; provincial 4-H program; agriculture-related degree-granting programs and continuing education courses; provincial dykeland system; environmental farm management programs; laboratory service; animal welfare; and disease prevention.

Priorities for 2000-01

Goal 1

Encourage the competitiveness of the agriculture and food industry so new employment and income opportunities can be created.

- Develop and implement a package of long-term, flexible programs for the agricultural industry to support economic sustainability and promote growth. Such programs will:
 - be developed through a strengthened partnership with the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture and cost-shared where possible with the federal government
 - meet the diverse developmental and risk management needs of farmers, industry groups, and agri-business
 - build upon federal-provincial income stabilization (safety net) programs.
- Insist that the federal government provide drought assistance to Nova Scotian farmers, according to their needs.
- Develop a water infrastructure strategy to help farmers proactively deal with future drought conditions and water shortages, support long-term planning, and lessen weather-related impacts on farm income.

- Develop a consumer awareness program for local food products through the province's quality-based Taste of Nova Scotia Program, ensuring that it is consistent with the provincial Buy Nova Scotia First initiative.
- Maintain the Nova Scotia Farm Loan Board as a separate entity to address the unique needs of Nova Scotian farmers, providing them with access to capital, particularly for new ventures, and stimulating growth and job creation in the rural economy.
- Identify and develop marketing opportunities for Nova Scotian food products, services, and technologies in domestic and priority international areas with specific emphasis on horticulture, organics, and value-added and direct market products.
- Initiate a marketing enhancement program for Nova Scotian agriculture and food industry groups, designed to strengthen and coordinate their marketing capacity and to support Nova Scotian products in local and international markets.
- Establish a New Entrants Program to continue the tradition of family farming in Nova Scotia and promote the continued growth of the rural economy by encouraging new farmers and new ideas.

- Facilitate a series of policy forums to stimulate debate and create understanding of agricultural issues.
- Increase federal and private-sector participation in research at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College (NSAC), creating new knowledge and technologies that support the province's agriculture, aquaculture, and rural communities.

Goal 2

Provide leadership in the development of human resources for the agriculture and food industry and for rural communities.

- Provide specialized skills training and educational opportunities for youth in rural communities through the provincial 4-H program.
- Working with the Department of Education, expand the current pilot project for agriculture-based high school curriculum to include schools province-wide.
- Establish new educational programs at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College in line with current issues facing rural Nova Scotians, including food quality assurance, organic agriculture, and rural resource management.
- Increase international enrolment at the NSAC by recruiting in New England and Iceland and by participating in international development and student exchange projects.



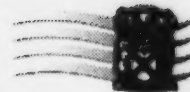
- Increase the number of highly trained and qualified agricultural personnel by increasing enrolment in the joint NSAC/Dalhousie MSc program.
- Increase federal and private-sector funding of international projects in order to provide programs with a global orientation for the benefit of NSAC's students and graduates and the industries they serve.
- Seek increased and stable support from the other Atlantic provinces for NSAC's agricultural technical programs.
- Employ new educational technology to deliver NSAC programs throughout Nova Scotia and beyond.
- In consultation with rural communities, develop an agricultural land policy to protect and sustain the province's valuable natural resources.
- Assist farmers in the continued adoption of sustainable farming practices through the Nova Scotia Environmental Farm Plan program and sustainable farming technology.
- Amend and consolidate existing food safety and meat inspection regulations to provide a single common public health protection standard across the province, enhancing food safety and contributing to a healthy Nova Scotia.
- Develop a provincial program for disease surveillance to protect the industry and support market development.

Goal 3

Foster an environmentally responsible and sustainable agriculture and food industry.

- Implement a Farm Practices Act that balances the needs of farmers and their non-farming neighbours and encourages sustainable resource management and future growth.
- Maintain livestock health services assistance for farm animals and reinstate the veterinary fee subsidy for large farm animals to ensure the viability of veterinary farm services and a healthy farm industry across the province.
- Complete the implementation of a Laboratory Information Management System to improve laboratory service to industry and the public.

Business and Consumer Services



Mission:

As the service delivery agent for government, to provide quality, cost-effective services for consumers and businesses in the province.

Strategic Goals

1. Provide quality, cost-effective services for government.
2. Make it easy for Nova Scotians to conduct business with the Government of Nova Scotia.
3. Ensure consumer protection and public road safety.

Core Business Functions

- Transaction Services
 - issuing licences, permits, certificates and registrations, processing payments, and collecting taxes
- Information and Referral Services
 - being the first point of contact for information on government programs and services and referring customers to the office that can provide detailed information
- Investigation and Compliance Services
 - enforcing regulation of certain industries, auditing taxes and other payments owing to government, and ensuring adherence with road safety requirements

- Counselling and Mediation Services
 - resolving residential tenancy disputes and helping individuals improve their money management skills

Priorities for 2000-01

Goal 1

Provide quality, cost-effective services for government.

- Complete the development of the Nova Scotia Business Registry as a system for government-wide service delivery.
- Increase the use of Access Nova Scotia Centres by exploring co-location options with other departments.
- Evaluate opportunities for increasing electronic delivery of services to individuals.
- Expand the capacity of the department's Telephone Information Centre to handle inquiries for all departmental programs and evaluate opportunities for handling calls for other departments.
- Integrate departmental operations along service lines.
- Identify ways to improve the quality of service by evaluating alternative service delivery options in a number of program areas.

Goal 2

Make it easy for Nova Scotians to conduct business with the Government of Nova Scotia.

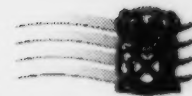
- Review the impact of gaming regulations on community groups and make the necessary amendments to support the contributions of these organizations.
- Work with the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency to determine the feasibility of fuel and tobacco taxes being administered and collected by that agency.
- Integrate delivery of services provided by Vital Statistics into those available at Access Nova Scotia Centres.

Goal 3

Ensure consumer protection and public road safety.

- Complete consultation and review of the legislation for embalmers, funeral directors and services, and cemeteries.
- Complete amendments to the Residential Tenancies Act resulting from a broadly based review of the act, and include a provision to allow landlords to evict individuals convicted of certain criminal activities.
- Revise cost-of-credit disclosure legislation to achieve harmonization with other provinces.
- Develop a program to provide seniors who participate in safe driving programs with a 50 per cent discount on Registry of Motor Vehicle fees.
- Increase consumer protection for TV and Internet sales.
- Work with the Road Safety Advisory Committee to develop measures to improve road safety in Nova Scotia.
- Amend the Motor Vehicle Inspection program to achieve enhanced road safety at a reduced cost to government.

Community Services



Mission:

To enhance the quality of life of communities in Nova Scotia by helping individuals, families, and communities reach their potential.

Strategic Goals

1. Optimization of available resources through redesigning delivery systems to promote fairness/efficiency.
2. Focus policy/programs on equity, independence, and lifelong learning.
3. Achieve quality and sustainability of services through innovative, effective partnerships.
4. Support prevention initiatives, thereby maximizing use of available resources for core services.

Core Business Functions

The Department of Community Services provides

- income and employment support programs to enable people to move toward employment
- intervention and support services for vulnerable children and adults
- support to a variety of community-based agencies to assist people in helping themselves

- development and monitoring of service delivery standards.

Priorities for 2000-01

Goal 1

Optimization of available resources through redesigning delivery systems to promote fairness/efficiency.

- Streamline legal services to children program, reducing court time/costs, develop interdepartmental partnerships.
- Implement technology improvements to improve case management.
- Move to more flexible subsidization models, e.g., a day-care subsidy.
- Finalize transfer of services to seniors to the Department of Health—support Single Entry Access initiative.

Goal 2

Focus policy/programs on equity, independence, and lifelong learning.

- Complete single-tier income support restructuring—focus on self-sufficiency, employability, lifelong learning.
- Improve service delivery—maximize linkages, integrate functions where possible.

Goal 3

Achieve quality and sustainability of services through innovative, effective partnerships.

- Maximize training/employment opportunities for clients—continuous access improvement under Labour Market Agreement.
- Maximize strategic partnerships—as the lead province for Year 2000 on social issues agenda.
- Work with government partners to support communities to maintain and grow self-sufficiency—community capacity-building initiatives.
- Provide greater encouragement for Nova Scotians receiving assistance to seek employment.

Goal 4

Support prevention initiatives, thereby maximizing use of available resources for core services.

- Reduce the incidence and depth of child poverty—continue the Healthy Child Development Initiatives.
- Prevent the working poor from needing welfare while reducing child poverty—enhance funding to Nova Scotia Child Benefit.
- Assist seniors to remain in own home—expand property tax rebate.

Economic Development



Mission:

*To create the right business climate for
the development of Nova Scotia's
people, communities, and enterprise.*

Strategic Goals

1. Focus on the development of more high-quality jobs across the province.
2. Establish a business environment that encourages and supports Nova Scotian entrepreneurs.
3. Foster and develop the innovative thinking that leads to economic opportunities and advancement.
4. Promote Nova Scotia's competitive advantages at home and abroad.
5. Support equality of opportunity and sustainable development in Nova Scotian communities.

Core Business Functions

- Encouraging innovation and its commercialization across the province.
- Creating a more responsive, less burdensome Nova Scotia business climate.
- Marketing the Nova Scotia advantage.
- Increasing trade and export activities.
- Supporting community economic development to empower communities in directing their own growth.

Improving the infrastructure required by communities for economic growth.

Developing a Nova Scotia work force with the skills needed in today's economy.

Priorities for 2000-01

Goal 1

Focus on the development of more high-quality jobs across the province.

- Coordinate the work between educational institutions to strategically develop the skills of Nova Scotian workers to meet the changing needs of the new economy.
- Work with other provincial and federal departments and educational institutions to develop a high-quality work force.
- Act to coordinate the skill requirements of Nova Scotian companies with training efforts of educational institutions.

Goal 2

Establish a business environment that encourages and supports Nova Scotian entrepreneurs.

- Work with business, labour and other business entities to produce an economic strategy framework.
- Work with other departments to simplify Nova Scotia's regulatory environment without jeopardizing the safety of workers.

- Continue to support the Department of Finance in its examination of business taxation levels.
- Take a leadership role in isolating impediments to economic growth and making recommendations to government for improvement.
- Review business development tools used in competing jurisdictions and develop options/recommendations for improvement.

Goal 3

Foster and develop the innovative thinking that leads to economic opportunities and advancement.

- In collaboration with Intergovernmental Affairs, continue to pursue partnerships with the federal government concerning the development of centres of excellence in research.
- Continue to work with and utilize InNOVAcorp to aggressively seek out and encourage companies that would benefit from R&D investment.
- Act as an advocate for the Nova Scotia private sector in the pursuit of economic opportunities arising from the offshore energy industry.

Goal 4

Promote Nova Scotia's competitive advantages at home and abroad.

- Capitalize on Nova Scotia's steadily developing and distinct international presence and accelerate export growth by developing a "Brand Nova Scotia"/"Buy Nova Scotia" program to support and encourage quality in our goods and services.
- Work in coordination with other departments to ensure marketing efforts aimed at specific industries reflect the "Brand Nova Scotia" advantage.
- Work closely with the federal government on marketing our products and services overseas and make more effective use of the federal infrastructure in other countries, such as Canada's network of embassies.
- Demonstrate more clearly industrial Cape Breton's economic diversity, through examples such as the leading-edge work being carried out at Silicon Island.

Goal 5

Support equality of opportunity and sustainable development in Nova Scotia's communities.

- Work with other departments and the federal government to ensure infrastructure investments are carefully planned to build on regional potential and advantages and to help companies grow.



Economic Development

- Work to identify economic opportunities for rural Nova Scotia, especially Cape Breton, and help to provide the necessary tools to improve their own capacity.
- Foster partnerships with communities to develop business in all regions of the province and to achieve more balanced prosperity.
- Continue to foster the development and increasing authority of the Regional Development Agencies to act as primary economic growth agents in their own communities.
- Work with social entities to integrate economic and social policy approaches.

Education



Mission:

To provide excellence in education and training for personal fulfillment and for a productive, prosperous society.

Strategic Goals

- Promote successful career transitions and lifelong learning.
- Provide quality public education and training.
- Promote access to post-secondary education.
- Use technology as an enabler.
- Ensure accountability.
- Address diversity through education.

Core Business Functions

The mandate of the department spans the public school system, community colleges, apprenticeship system, universities, public libraries, and other programs and services to support lifelong learning. The core business functions fall into five main functions.

- Developing, implementing, and delivering programs and services
 - working with education partners on public school curriculum, teacher professional development, teacher certification, Canada and Nova Scotia student loan programs, apprenticeship training and certification, and programs and services for public libraries

- Evaluating programs and services
 - regional and national testing of students, college and university graduate follow-up surveys, and monitoring of curriculum implementation
- Providing funding and financial services
 - provincial grants and auditing services for school boards, community colleges, universities, and public libraries
- Undertaking policy and planning initiatives
 - strategic and business planning, public consultation and communication, and federal-provincial relations (immigration, youth employment, labour mobility) related to departmental responsibilities
- Consulting and providing support services
 - school construction and renovations, advice and support to school boards and public libraries in such areas as financing, technology, busing, indoor air quality, etc., and advice to government on university and community college issues

Priorities for 2000–01

Goal 1

Promote successful career transitions and lifelong learning.

- Through extensive partnering, the department is developing a framework to support an adult basic education system that is accessible, affordable, and connected. The Adult Basic Education Initiative is exploring the

development of a common credential for adult learners seeking high school completion. This could ensure portability from one program to another and provide greater access to further educational opportunities and employment.

- Work is under way to strengthen the 27 community-based networks that participate in the Nova Scotia Community Learning Initiative. This includes requesting more accountability regarding learner data, program and curriculum standards, and organizational plans. To support community-based and workplace learning, adult education practitioner training is being developed or enhanced, including Tutor and Instructor Training and Certification, Workplace Education Training and Certification, curriculum and outcomes-based workshops, as well as other professional development opportunities.
- Literacy is a critical issue in Nova Scotia, and efforts are required to raise literacy rates in all age groups. Two joint federal/provincial committees on this issue have been established: one focuses on literacy across the life span, and the other examines various issues affecting the early years, including literacy in young children.
- Planning has begun to establish a Job Opportunities Bureau, with membership from government, business, labour, universities, community colleges, and the public school system. The mandate of the bureau will be to ensure the effective communication of future labour market requirements and to maintain an interactive website to raise awareness among young Nova Scotians of the latest training and employment opportunities.
- *Grads@Work* has been piloted in three locations. The initiative involves a customized job search program to promote career related work search for new post-secondary graduates.
- A tool to help career and guidance counselors support Nova Scotians in their career planning will be released in the spring. *Labour Market Information @ Work in Nova Scotia: A Guide for Practitioners* was developed by a joint federal/provincial working group.

Goal 2

Provide quality public education and training.

- Curriculum implementation in the public school system will focus on priority areas, with particular emphasis on math in the English school system and on science, math, and French language arts in the French school system.

- The department will provide adequate and safe schools and equipment by
 - continuing with its commitment to complete 31 new schools, with an additional 17 schools slated for delivery by 2004
 - overseeing the addition and alteration program for major renovations to existing school buildings
 - working with school boards and other provincial departments to identify and resolve environmental problems in schools.
- Initiatives to improve the environment in which our children learn will include
 - implementing comprehensive guidance and counselling programs in Acadian schools
 - supporting initiatives to reduce violence and promote a positive learning environment and leading an initiative to develop a code of conduct for students
 - implementing a system-wide enrichment initiative to support gifted students and students with special needs, provide professional development for individual program planning at the high school level, and introduce a guide for resource teacher services
 - continuing to work with school boards and parents to ensure there is a range of programming choices and services available within the school system to meet the special needs of students.
- The department will help universities to obtain Canadian Foundation for Innovation grants aimed at enhancing innovation, promoting private sector involvement in research and development, and keeping our best university researchers and teachers in Nova Scotia.

Goal 3

Promote access to post-secondary education.

- Arrangements for continued delivery of federal and provincial student loan programs will be in place for the August 1, 2000 processing year through discussions currently under way with the federal government.

- To improve opportunities for students who wish to bridge from the public school system into trades and skills training
 - Discussions will continue with school boards to implement pre-college programming tracks within the high school system starting in grade 11. The Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) has signed agreements with three school boards (Southwest, Chignecto–Central, and Cape Breton–Victoria).
 - The department will continue to cooperate with public and private trainers to develop alternative delivery strategies for apprenticeship training, including Internet and classroom delivery outside of the traditional schedules.
 - The Nova Scotia Council on Higher Education will continue to advise the Minister on credit transfer and articulation agreements between the universities and community colleges.
 - A mentorship program will be set up by the NSCC and Rehabilitation Programs and Services to help students with disabilities who are leaving the public education system to enter community college technology programs.

Goal 4

Use technology as an enabler.

Technology is an enabler for effective learning and for developing the skills necessary for future learning and entry into the labour market. Creating an environment where learning and technology go hand in hand will give Nova Scotians a competitive edge in the labour market.

- The Information Economy Initiative (IEI) will continue in 2000–01. A major investment in Nova Scotia's schools, universities, and communities, the IEI is designed to stimulate economic development and learning by putting thousands of new computers and technological links at the fingertips of students, teachers, businesses, and community members across Nova Scotia.
- To support students with disabilities pursuing skills training, the department is working with the Learning Resource Centres within the NSCC to develop and implement an assistive/adaptive technology system.

- A specialized career action program for post-secondary students will mobilize available youth employment strategy resources. It will help students create dynamic résumés and personal presentations for successful job searches using the Internet and non-traditional methods of job search, such as cold calls, networking, and information interviewing.
- Through a partnership with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 114 additional Internet workstations will be available in 56 of Nova Scotia's public libraries, and regional training centres will be established in Sydney, Truro, Halifax, and Yarmouth. The gift of \$855,300 will make computers and the Internet available to people who would otherwise not have access to this technology.
- The department will continue to work with the NSCC to make more apprenticeship programs available via the Virtual Campus, a technology developed in partnership with Human Resources Development Canada. New apprenticeship training agreements will be entered into with training providers to ensure quality and accountability in the outcomes of apprenticeship training.

Goal 5

Ensure accountability.

Common assessments for public schools provide an important accountability measure of how well our system is performing. They give the department, school boards, teachers, and the general public valuable information about the achievement of students and the effects of a public school education.

- The department is developing a Program of Learning Assessment for Nova Scotia, based on the "Principles of Fair Student Assessment." These assessments involve testing in elementary, junior high, and senior high school and regular reporting of results. Assessment development will continue with implementation of Chemistry 12, English 12, and English/Communication 12, beginning in January 2000.
- In light of the KPMG report on public-private partnerships, the department will implement necessary changes to accomplish new school construction and major renovations within the framework of a future and revised delivery model.

- The recommendations arising from the review of school board boundaries will be considered, and government directions will be implemented over the coming months. In January 2000, the five-person task force completed the review with an emphasis on reviewing financial operations, programs, and services (e.g., equitable and consistent policy development), roles and responsibilities, and Francophone governance. Consultations were held with stakeholders and the general public.

Goal 6

Address diversity through education.

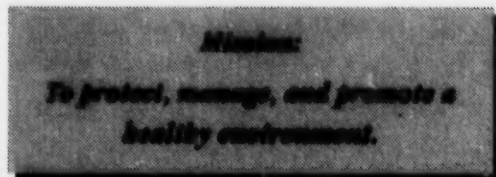
The goal of improving race relations and cross-cultural understanding is to value, understand, and respect Canada's multi-cultural and multi-racial diversity throughout all areas of the department's mandate.

- The department will continue to be involved in initiatives that meet the needs of African-Nova Scotians and Mi'kmaq students. A racial equity policy is being developed for implementation in the next school year.
- To further enhance the role of African-Nova Scotians in the public school system, a seat will be designated on each of the regional school boards for African-Nova Scotian representation.

Mi'kmaq currently have designated seats on school boards.

- The presence of international students in Nova Scotia classrooms, at both secondary and post-secondary levels, leads to greater appreciation and understanding of other cultures and helps internationalize curricula and programming. A framework will be developed to guide the delivery of English as a Second Language programs in the public school system.
- Advancing accessibility is key. The Nova Scotia Council on Higher Education will continue to recommend support for targeted programs at Dalhousie University, Saint Mary's University, and University College of Cape Breton to assist African Canadian and Mi'kmaq students and students with physical challenges.

Environment



Strategic Goals

1. Improve the level of environmental management and protection.
2. Provide efficient and cost-effective program and service delivery.
3. Support innovative approaches to achieving sustainable development.
4. Promote stewardship of the environment through partnerships with various organizations.

Core Business Functions

- Inspection and monitoring
 - enforcing legislation and related inspection and approval processes and achieving regulatory compliance through a range of collaborative and punitive measures
- Stewardship/education
 - supporting industry-managed programs, industry-funded programs, and legislated programs
 - developing and delivering programs that educate the public about environmental issues and potential solutions

- supporting public access to information and broad-based public consultations to increase knowledge and allow input into decision making
- Technological innovation
 - promoting and supporting Nova Scotia-based environmental technologies in order to contribute to enhanced environmental protection and sustainable economic development
- Policy development
 - developing policies to ensure sound environmental management and protection programs
 - developing and updating legislation, regulations, policies, standards, and guidelines to address new and evolving issues.

Priorities for 2000–01

Goal 1

Improve the level of environmental management and protection.

Contaminated Sites Management

- Develop a comprehensive strategy for managing contaminated sites, compile an inventory of sites, and determine priority areas for remediation.
- Ensure that site remediation occurs in an environmentally sound manner and that provincial environmental interests are properly protected.

Wastewater Treatment

- Reduce the level of raw sewage discharged into coastal waters and ensure that household sewage disposal systems (used by approximately 45 per cent of the population) are properly used and maintained.
- Develop a provincial Wastewater Treatment Strategy, following public consultations, outlining key issues, examining new technologies, defining potential roles, and identifying potential partnerships.

Water Resource Management

- Improve water supply management by working cooperatively with municipalities to access a clean water supply and with farmers to secure a water supply for present and future irrigation requirements, as provided for in the proposed Water Resource Management Strategy.

Protected Areas Management

- Protect biodiversity and contribute to the sustainable management and use of air, water, and land resources through planning and managing designated wilderness areas, nature reserves, and heritage rivers.
- Encourage protection of significant natural sites and features on private lands through public consultation and partnerships with organizations and private land owners.

Goal 2

Provide efficient and cost-effective program and service delivery.

Legislative Review

- Conduct a comprehensive review of the legislative framework in accordance with the requirements of the Environment Act; assess and refine the legislation, and refocus the department's mandate and allocation of resources to better serve the public and protect the environment.
- Support the efforts of the external advisory committee established to oversee the legislative review process, and coordinate seven regional meetings in the spring of 2000 to gather public input.

Services Review

- Review current departmental programs, services, and activities; reassess strategic direction, effectiveness, and efficiency of programs and activities; and, based on the results, and in conjunction with the results of legislative review, reassess the appropriateness of resource allocation.



Risk-Based Auditing

- Implement a risk-based approach to auditing to provide staff with tools to more accurately assess the level of environmental risk associated with approved activities and to allocate monitoring and inspection resources accordingly.

On-Site Sewage Management

- Implement a regulatory framework that allows greater involvement of qualified private-sector individuals in the selection and design of household sewage disposal systems, thereby increasing job creation opportunities while allowing departmental resources to be reallocated to other critical monitoring and inspection functions.

Goal 3

Support innovative approaches to achieving sustainable development.

Environmental Industries and Technologies

- Address environmental challenges by working with staff, local businesses, municipalities, and other government departments to provide solutions to environmental issues; initiate job creation opportunities in the environmental sector through the promotion of cost-effective and innovative environmental solutions and technologies.

- Assist in the development, demonstration, and export growth of environmental technologies by researching trends, evaluating technologies, and providing business advice to entrepreneurs.

Goal 4

Promote stewardship of the environment through partnerships with various organizations.

Solid Waste Resource Management

- Achieve the province's goal of 50 per cent diversion of solid waste from 1989 levels through support and monitoring of municipal recycling and composting programs.
- Facilitate industry stewardship agreements to increase the industry responsibility for recycling goods and materials such as paint and newsprint.

Environmental Green Plan

- Develop a framework for the development of a "green plan" for Nova Scotia, targeted for release in 2002-03.

Environmental Education

- Develop, deliver, and evaluate environmental education materials, increasing awareness of options for water management and for the installation of household sewage disposal systems.

Finance



Mission:

To establish a fiscal climate conducive to economic growth and to provide central agency support and policy direction for effective management of the province's finances, government procurement, and pensions administration.

Strategic Goals

1. Enhance financial accountability in the management and control of the province's finances.
2. Enhance Nova Scotia's long-term fiscal position, provide for fair and efficient taxation, and promote economic growth in a strategic way that balances the social responsibilities of government, debt reduction, and a lowering of the tax burden.
3. Provide a core set of high-quality corporate services and infrastructure that supports the efficient and effective management of the province's public resources, including government accounting, payroll, pensions, budgeting, treasury, procurement, statistics, and internal audit.
4. Achieve effective money management that maximizes return on investments and minimizes debt-servicing costs within acceptable risk tolerances.
5. Ensure a responsible regulatory environment that safeguards pension entitlements and ensures fair and competitive procurement.
6. Foster an environment that values its clients and its employees.

Core Business Functions

- Financial management
 - promoting effective financial accountability through expenditure control and financial reporting
 - providing direction to the planning and review of the budget process and prepares the budget documents
 - overseeing the accounting of government financial transactions, prepares periodic financial reports, and initiates corrective action as necessary
 - liaising with the Auditor General in conducting the external audit of the province's finances, conducts internal audits, and reviews government programs.
- Investment, pensions, and debt management
 - managing provincial investments, trust funds, pension funds, liability obligations, and treasury operations
 - providing for the regulation of private-sector pension plans

- administering the Teachers Pension Plan, the Public Service Superannuation Plan, the MLAs' Pension Plan, and the province's Public Service Award Program.
- Policy development
 - researching, analysing, forecasting, and providing recommendations to government with respect to provincial fiscal, economic, statistical, pensions, and procurement policy and activities
 - researching and developing a comprehensive, cohesive tax regime that is sensitive to the fiscal, social, and economic priorities of government
 - developing policy and providing strong representation and negotiation of Nova Scotia's interests covering a wide variety of federal-provincial, regional, and interdepartmental committees and task groups, including such things as fiscal arrangements, statistics, pensions, and procurement.
- Procurement
 - providing innovation to and direction for the administration of government procurement and supply processes
 - overseeing administration of procurement-related trade agreements and providing general services, policy direction, and advice to government and other publicly funded bodies, including the MASH sector (municipalities, academia, schools and hospitals).
- Corporate services
 - providing corporate services in government accounting, payroll, pensions, budgeting, treasury, procurement, statistics, and internal audit.

Priorities for 2000–01

Goal 1

Enhance financial accountability in the management and control of the province's finances.

- Enhance accountability and governance structures as they relate to public policy and administration of financial resources through the continued improvement of the province's financial management policies and procedures.
- Improve overall fiscal management by producing more relevant and timely financial reports and by implementing recommendations of the Auditor General in a timely manner.
- Continue to develop reporting and control instruments to ensure full transparency and accountability in the procurement process.

Goal 2

Enhance Nova Scotia's long-term fiscal position, provide for fair and efficient taxation, and promote economic growth in a strategic way that balances the social responsibilities of government, debt reduction, and lowering of the tax burden.

- Effectively represent Nova Scotia's interests in federal-provincial negotiations and discussions on such matters as national trade issues, transfer programs, tax collection agreements, and the statistical databases that support them.
- Provide analysis and advice on emerging and ongoing taxation issues, including a review of existing tax policy, enhancing the province's control over its tax systems, and effectively representing Nova Scotia in federal-provincial tax policy discussions. This includes implementing the Tax on Income System and continuing the Tax Credit Review process.
- Develop a strategy for the long-term reduction of debt in the province, establishing criteria for assessing loans and guarantees and strategies to reduce the province's exposure to financial risks.

Goal 3

Provide a core set of high-quality corporate services and infrastructure that supports the efficient and effective management of the province's public resources, including government accounting, payroll, pensions, budgeting, treasury, procurement, statistics, and internal audit.

- Review and revise procurement processes, documentation, and support systems to maximize organizational effectiveness, efficiency, and service quality to meet quality assurance and service standards.
- Extend procurement and Corporate Financial Management System (CFMS) service offerings to include the MASH sector where appropriate.
- Improve service delivery in payroll and benefits administration and Internal Audit.
- Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the delivery of pension services to plan members and beneficiaries.

Goal 4

Achieve effective money management that maximizes return on investments and minimizes debt-servicing costs within acceptable risk tolerances.

- Integrate treasury management systems and capital market information systems to enhance the overall control, monitoring, and performance of the Liability Management and Investment Divisions.
- Develop and implement an effective risk review process for risk assets booked directly by the province or through Crown agencies and corporations.

Goal 5

Ensure a responsible regulatory environment that safeguards pension entitlements and ensures fair and competitive procurement.

- Amend the Pensions Benefits Act to achieve harmonization with other jurisdictions and clarification of provisions and to address the needs of plan members and sponsors.

Goal 6

Foster an environment that values its clients and its employees.

- Continue to develop a professional, productive, and skilled work force in a healthy and safe work environment.
- Acquire and develop technologies to improve productivity and output quality.

Fisheries and Aquaculture



Mission:

To serve, develop and optimize the harvesting, processing and recreational segments of the Nova Scotian fishing and aquaculture industries for the betterment of our coastal communities and the province as a whole.

Strategic Goals

1. Protect Nova Scotia's interests in fishery management policies to ensure fair economic opportunities in rural regions.
2. Foster a climate for economic growth and job creation in rural communities by promoting and supporting opportunities for diversification.
3. Create a strategic environment for a sustainable and expanding aquaculture industry.
4. Work with Nova Scotia's seafood producers to promote their products worldwide, develop new products, and penetrate new markets.
5. Ensure that programs and services to the fishing and aquaculture sectors offer best value for money and are accountable for results achieved.
6. Conserve and enhance inland fish stocks and increase economic returns for businesses servicing a sportfishing clientele.

7. Support lifelong learning in Nova Scotia's coastal and rural communities by providing consulting services and training in fisheries and aquaculture.

Core Business Functions

- Resource management and development
 - protecting Nova Scotia's interests in government/industry discussions on managing and sharing marine resources
 - working with federal and provincial agencies to address Native and non-Native fishing issues
 - building on the inherent strengths of our rural and coastal communities by developing new fisheries, aquaculture, recreational fishing, and boat building.
- Manage Nova Scotia's freshwater resources
 - administering and issuing licenses, leases, and loans and enforcing regulations
 - ensuring sustainable resources and stable jobs in fish processing, aquaculture, sea-plant harvesting, and the sportfishery
 - tackling the problem of illegal fishing, buying, and selling of fish products.

- Provide technical and marketing services
 - improving production, value, and sales of Nova Scotian wild and farmed seafood
 - assisting in the development of new seafood products and value-added processing
 - increasing marketability and exports of Nova Scotia-built vessels and fishing technology
 - helping communities maintain essential harbour infrastructure for the fishing industry and other coastal users.
- Provide education and training
 - helping Nova Scotians achieve lifelong learning skills in the traditional fisheries and in new emerging job sectors, including aquaculture and eco-tourism.
- Ensure that the federal government clearly defines who is eligible to participate in the Native food and treaty rights fishery.
- Aggressively represent Nova Scotian fishing interests to the federal government to ensure a fair share of resources.
- Ensure that the Minister's Council meets twice a year with industry groups to address major issues, including offshore oil and gas development.

Goal 2

Foster a climate for economic growth and job creation in rural communities by promoting and supporting opportunities for diversification.

- Support policies that recognize that the traditional strength of Nova Scotia's fishery is in the diversification of plant, vessel, and gear type.
- Support innovation and self-reliance in rural communities by assisting efforts to develop new fish harvesting and export opportunities.

Priorities for 2000-01

Goal 1

Protect Nova Scotia's interests in fishery management policies to ensure fair economic opportunities in rural regions.

- Tackle the growing problem of illegal fishing, buying, and selling by strengthening fisheries enforcement efforts.



- Maintain stability in the industry and foster a competitive business climate by providing financial support through the Fisheries and Aquaculture Loan Board and by establishing a mechanism that will allow licences, ITQs (individual transferable quotas), and EAs (enterprise allocations) to be considered assets in arranging for loans through the Fisheries and Aquaculture Loan Board.

Goal 3

Create a strategic environment for a sustainable and expanding aquaculture industry.

- Provide suitable aquatic lease space for increased aquaculture activity and on-site fish health, technical, and farm management support.
- Promote best husbandry practices and new farm species to improve the industry's ability to compete effectively.

Goal 4

Work with Nova Scotia's seafood producers to promote their products worldwide, develop new products, and penetrate new markets.

- Increase sales of Nova Scotia's seafood products, including aquaculture products, in the food service industry through targeted marketing and promotions.

- Promote research and development of new seafood products, especially value-added products.
- Place real emphasis on marketing Nova Scotia's seafood products as an integral part of the Buy Nova Scotia First program.
- Help fish processors meet compliance requirements of the Canadian Food and Inspection Agency and other health and safety matters.

Goal 5

Ensure that programs and services to the fishing and aquaculture sectors offer best value for money and are accountable for results achieved.

- Continue to participate in annual business and budget planning process to ensure that the department delivers its programs and services within designated budget targets and reports on performance.
- Continue to provide direct, single-window service delivery to our clients through offices based in rural centres.
- Improve public and client access to information and departmental services through an enhanced website.

Goal 6

Conserve and enhance inland fish stocks and increase economic returns for businesses servicing a sportfishing clientele.

- Manage inland resources through successful partnerships with stakeholder groups, and promote sportfishing in Nova Scotia through stocking programs, sportfishing events, and new angling opportunities.

Goal 7

Support lifelong learning in Nova Scotia's coastal and rural communities by providing consulting services and training in fisheries and aquaculture.

- Ensure that our educational system reflects the diverse nature of Nova Scotia's communities by providing traditional training programs and new courses in emerging areas such as eco-tourism and aquaculture.

Health



Mission:

Through leadership and collaboration, to promote, maintain and improve the health of Nova Scotians and ensure an appropriate and affordable health care system.

Strategic Goals

The goals of the Department of Health are in the broad areas of health, service, and sustainability.

1. **Health:** Help Nova Scotians achieve better health.
2. **Service:** Ensure that Nova Scotians have access to quality health care services when they are needed.
3. **Sustainability:** Fund a single-tiered health system based on Nova Scotia's ability to pay.

Evidence-based planning and decision making will be used throughout the health care system. Planning and resource allocation will be linked to health outcomes.

Core Business Functions

The Department of Health is committed to the ongoing improvement of our health care system through planning, legislation, resource allocation, standards development and monitoring, evaluation, and information management. Accordingly, the department's core business functions are:

- setting the strategic direction for the health care system and developing provincial policy and standards that enable accountability and support the strategic direction
- providing funding to health authorities, hospitals, physicians, and others in the provincial health system
- monitoring, evaluating, and reporting on performance and outcomes across the health system
- ensuring that quality health services are available for Nova Scotians.

Priorities for 2000–01

Goal 1

Health: Help Nova Scotians achieve better health.

- Promote a healthy population by participating with others in initiatives aimed at each of the areas of Nova Scotia's health goals: health promotion, healthy environment, healthy living, good management, public participation, and social justice.

- Establish and formalize through legislation the role and function of Community Health Boards in providing advice to District Health Authorities (DHAs) on matters relating to community-based primary care and in selecting DHA members.
- Promote and support the health and well-being of children and youth in Nova Scotia through intergovernmental, interdepartmental, and intersectoral collaboration in policy development and program funding.

Goal 2

Service: Ensure that Nova Scotians have access to quality health care services when they are needed.

- Complete the transition of the health care system from a regional health board structure to District Health Authorities. The nine District Health Authorities will be accountable to the Minister of Health for the planning and delivery of appropriate health care services. The transition will be accomplished with a minimum of disruption to the health care system, care providers, patients, and families.

- Establish community-based primary health care as the foundation of the health care system. Integrated community-based services will be provided across the province under the direction of the new District Health Authorities.
- Assume responsibility for all seniors' programs and services and introduce a system of single-entry to home care and long-term care services. This will ensure appropriate and timely access and placement for Nova Scotians who need these services.

Goal 3

Sustainability: Fund a single-tiered health system based on Nova Scotia's ability to pay.

- Provide leadership to the health care system in managing the demand for health services. Health services must be provided where and when they can do the most good.
- Develop a clinical services master plan for the province of Nova Scotia. The plan will identify the publicly funded health care services that must be available to Nova Scotians and will determine the location of each on the basis of clinical need, quality and access standards, and available funding.



Health

- Complete reviews of the hospital and mental health services systems in Nova Scotia and implement recommendations aimed at improving service while holding the line on costs.
- Continue emphasis on health human resource planning to ensure that Nova Scotians have access to physicians, nurses, and other health care professionals when they need them.
- Develop and implement a health information management strategy that will enable quality care delivery and efficient management practices throughout the health care system.
- Promote health services and medical research in Nova Scotia by establishing and supporting the Nova Scotia Health Research Foundation.

Housing and Municipal Affairs



Mission:

Support the development and maintenance of strong communities by providing leadership and service to promote effective, local government; equitable property valuation; adequate, affordable housing; and an integrated land information system.

Strategic Goals

1. Foster strong, effective municipalities in their delivery of local services.

Strong, effective local governments support strong communities in all regions of the province; create an environment that supports economic growth; respond to the needs of Nova Scotians; deliver essential local services effectively; and contribute to the fiscal stability of Nova Scotia.

2. Support the provision and maintenance of safe, adequate, affordable housing.

Safe, adequate, affordable housing protects and enhances the quality of life of Nova Scotians and their communities; provides the environment and base needed to effectively deliver other social programs, such as health (including home care) and education; and creates employment in the residential construction sector throughout Nova Scotia.

3. Provide integrated, accessible, current geographic information and real and personal property registration for the benefit of all Nova Scotians.

Maintenance and enhancement of vital geographic information databases supports effective land development and administration; resource development in forestry, mining, agriculture, and fishing industries; and emergency dispatch and the E-911 system; and it contributes to strong communities by putting geographic information in the hands of local decision makers. Reform of the personal property registration system through the Registry 2000 initiative will enhance the economic competitiveness of Nova Scotia by modernizing and streamlining the system to achieve greater efficiency.

Core Business Functions

- Municipal government
 - representing municipal interests within the province and provincial interests to municipalities
 - delivering a uniform and efficient system for assessing the value of property
 - providing advice and assistance to municipalities in the areas of administration, financial management, building safety, and land use planning

- delivering capital assistance and grant programs to municipalities in an efficient and equitable manner
- Housing
 - developing and delivering provincial and federal/provincial housing programs equitably throughout the province
 - administering the federal/provincial Social Housing Agreement to ensure efficient and effective use of housing resources
 - providing proficient residential property management for public housing and adequate, affordable housing for families, individuals, and seniors
 - planning, developing, and selling land in the provincial residential land assemblies
- Land information
 - providing leadership in the management of the province's geographic infrastructure by coordinating the development and implementation of the province's GeoNova vision for policies and standards, which is required to ensure that integrated geographic information is available to all Nova Scotians
 - developing, maintaining, and distributing the province's primary geographic databases, including coordinate referencing, topography, aerial photography, and land ownership to support decision making in the government, private, and public sectors
 - protecting the integrity of Nova Scotia's land ownership system and providing public access to the personal property registration records and services

Priorities for 2000–01

Departmental priorities to support the achievement of all goals include: implementing an information technology strategy that creates opportunities in electronic commerce; collaborating with municipalities and other agencies on data collection and information sharing; enhancing Internet access (for municipalities and the public) to department information; and undertaking technology renewal required to keep the assessment system current and at a standard that meets stakeholder needs.

Goal 1

Foster strong, effective municipalities in their delivery of local services.

- Continue to file a preliminary assessment roll and information line service, continue to educate municipalities and property owners, and continue with the provincial assessment inspection program.
- Develop, in partnership with municipalities, a full cost-recovery program for the delivery of assessment services.
- Start to implement the recommendations of the Municipal Provincial Roles and Responsibilities Review to rationalize provincial/municipal service delivery so that the right level of government is delivering the appropriate service in the most efficient, accountable, and effective manner.
- Negotiate and implement the Canada–Nova Scotia Infrastructure Works Program 3 for municipal infrastructure development.
- Implement the Inclusive Transportation Pilot Project models to better meet the transportation needs of all Nova Scotians, including those with disabilities.
- Prepare statements of provincial interest to protect the province's resources.

- Support the creation of partnerships among all levels of government for the delivery of common services.

- Implement the Community Accessibility Program to provide improved access to public buildings for all citizens.

Goal 2

Support the provision and maintenance of safe, adequate, affordable housing.

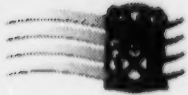
- Help more households in all parts of the province that are in need of essential repairs to take full advantage of the increased federal and provincial funding for the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP). The program funding has doubled, to approximately \$8 million.
- Develop partnerships and community-based strategies, in consultation with other provincial departments, the federal government, and community organizations, that will meet the needs of the homeless and those at risk of being homeless.
- Provide safe, affordable housing to Nova Scotians in need by maintaining a social housing portfolio.

Goal 3

Provide integrated, accessible, current geographic information, and real and personal property registration for the benefit of all Nova Scotians.

- Continue the process of reforming and modernizing the land registration system in Nova Scotia by completing Phase One of Registry 2000. This phase includes consultation with stakeholders, preparation of a sustainable business case, and introduction of land titles legislation.
- Review and revise, as required, the policies and the delivery of coordinate referencing and topographic geographic data, to ensure that these reflect technology and user needs; and develop a multi-year strategy for the coordination of geographic information across the provincial government that addresses the government's anticipated future requirements.
- Protect and take advantage of the province's significant investment in primary geographic information databases by developing and implementing sustainable maintenance strategies and enhancing the databases to reflect user requirements for better and more comprehensive information such as civic addresses.

Human Resources



Mission:

To provide corporate human resource policy, programs, and consultative services for civil servants and other direct employees of government that are focused on building the human potential of government and delivering high-quality government services in an efficient manner.

Strategic Goals

1. Develop human resources policies and strategies to achieve smaller government through workforce reduction and workforce adjustment in the context of statutory/contractual requirements.
2. Provide corporate policies and frameworks that support departments with implementing workforce adjustment strategies, ensuring that such strategies are designed to meet government's current and future human resource requirements, focusing on issues relevant to recruitment, selection, retention, development, and rewards.
3. Provide corporate policies for safe and healthy work environments to build a healthier province.

4. Establish corporate policies that assist with developing a work force that reflects Nova Scotia's diverse population, in support of the government's commitment to fairness to regions and to the people.

Core Business Functions

The Department of Human Resources provides corporate human resource policy, programs and consultative services to all departments, boards, commissions, and agencies in the following areas:

- collective bargaining and labour relations
- diversity management
- employee health services
- human resource information management
- policy development and research staffing, classification, and compensation
- training and development

Priorities for 2000-01

Goal 1

Develop human resources policies and strategies to achieve smaller government through workforce reduction and workforce adjustment in the context of statutory/contractual requirements.

- Oversee workforce reduction and restructuring to achieve a smaller, more efficient government through the development and implementation of short-term, medium-term, and long-term workforce adjustment strategies. A Flexible Work Options Program will be developed as a medium- to long-term restructuring strategy to minimize the human resources problems that often develop subsequent to downsizing and to focus on building the human resources necessary for sustainable government.
- Undertake collective bargaining with Civil Service and other direct employees of government, including teachers, corrections workers, and highway workers, totalling 9,860 persons. The labour relations climate will be significantly challenged by the workforce reduction and workforce adjustment that will be occurring concurrently with collective bargaining.

Goal 2

Provide corporate policies and frameworks which support departments with implementing workforce adjustment strategies ensuring that such strategies are designed to meet government's current and future human resource requirements focusing on issues relevant to recruitment, selection, retention, development and rewards.

Human Resources Policy Frameworks for Strengthened Accountability in Government

- Coordinate human resource personnel across government to support restructuring strategies in a consistent and efficient manner.
- Implement an employee recognition program designed to recognize and encourage outstanding achievements of employees in the areas of government cost savings and service improvement.
- Implement a corporate recruitment strategy that enables government to attract and retain employees with the required leadership skills.
- Seek approval for a revised Management Compensation Policy to recruit and retain the resources necessary for a productive sustainable work force.

Youth employment

- Seek to double the capacity of the existing Career Starts internship program in 2000-01.

Goal 3

Provide corporate policies for safe and healthy work environments to build a healthier province.

- Continue to provide services to employees and their families to assist with government restructuring through the Employee Assistance Program and conduct a review of the existing Employee Assistance Policy.
- Through the joint union-management committee, develop and implement a Disability Management Policy as a medium-term restructuring strategy.

Goal 4

Establish corporate policies that assist in developing a work force that reflects Nova Scotia's diverse population, in support of the government's commitment to fairness to regions and to the people.

- Continue to deliver the Diversity and Employment Equity Education Program to all government employees.
- Provide departments with a framework to help integrate diversity principles into business practices.
- Continue to work with community groups and educators to strengthen recruitment processes among Nova Scotia's diverse population.

Justice



Mission:

The Department of Justice is committed to the fair and effective administration of justice and to excellence in service to the people of Nova Scotia.

Strategic Goals

1. Improve public safety and security.
2. Provide effective dispute resolution mechanisms.
3. Offer a coordinated response to victims of crime.
4. Provide safe and secure custody and control and effective supervision of offenders.
5. Promote the lawful administration of public affairs.

Sustainability

In making our homes and our streets safer, using legislative tools and community-based actions, we are preserving Nova Scotia's quality of life, allowing us to attract business and investment.

Accessibility

In lessening the financial burden for families in crisis and in expanding the jurisdiction of the small claims court for people in conflict, we are providing more accessible and more effective dispute resolution mechanisms.

Fairness

In stepping up enforcement and fine collection, and examining the possibility of a cost-recovery program for the custody of impaired drivers, we will ensure that those who break the law will pay for their actions.

Accountability

In holding individuals accountable when a crime is committed, and in holding parents responsible for the actions of their children in conflict with the law, we are promoting safety and security while improving accountability and community responsibility.

Core Business Functions

- Providing legal services to government.
- Providing custody/supervision of offenders.
- Providing infrastructure and support to courts.
- Enforcing court orders.

- Establishing and monitoring compliance with standards for delivery of police services.
- Providing services to victims of crime.

Priorities for 2000–01

Goal 1

Improve public safety and security.

- Implement a comprehensive and effective crime prevention strategy in cooperation with police, community organizations, schools, and the public and corporate sectors.
- Deliver critical training to police officers and establish a comprehensive audit policy to ensure compliance with provincial policing standards so that we may enhance the safety and security of our communities and the quality of police investigations.
- Develop a comprehensive strategy for the delivery of policing services that will respond to the changing needs of our communities.
- Develop effective early intervention strategies targeted to youth at risk, in cooperation with the departments of Health, Community Services, and Education, the Sport and Recreation Commission, and the Youth Secretariat.

- Implement a program to educate seniors on how to effectively deal with situations where they consider their safety is at risk.
- Prepare legislation that provides for the forfeiture of "johns" vehicles in prostitution-related offences.

Goal 2

Provide effective dispute resolution mechanisms.

- Continue to put children first with the further development and expansion of the Family Division of the Supreme Court.
- Continue to hold offenders accountable and give victims a voice as we further develop and implement our restorative justice program.
- Improve fine collection and the enforcement of fines.
- Modernize and simplify procedures relating to the Probate Act.
- Focus on improved client service in the court system.
- Prepare legislation that will require parents to make restitution to victims where the lack of proper parental supervision has caused a young person to commit a crime.

- Assist people in resolving conflict by extending the jurisdiction of Small Claims Court and by incorporating mediation services into the civil court process.

Goal 3

Offer a coordinated response to victims of crime.

- Implement and evaluate the federal legislation affecting victims of crime and develop a plan of action that will place greater emphasis on the rights of victims of crime.
- Ensure victims of home invasions are eligible for funds under the Criminal Injuries Compensation Program.

Goal 4

Provide safe and secure custody and control and effective supervision of offenders.

- Construct a new adult correctional facility next to a new forensic hospital in the metro area.
- Examine a cost-recovery program for custody of impaired drivers.
- Reduce costs and increase fine payment revenues with the Fine Option Program.

- Work in partnership with the legal community, service organizations, and other government departments to respond effectively to children under 12 who commit crimes.

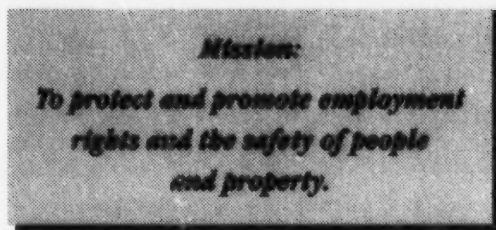
- Develop a plan for the implementation of the proposed federal Youth Criminal Justice Act.

Goal 5

Promote the lawful administration of public affairs.

- Implement the new Juries Act to provide for greater representativeness and more efficient procedures for jury selection.
- Issue a privacy discussion paper for government and private sector-held personal information.
- Complete consultations on the Fatality Inquiries Act.

Labour



Strategic Goals

1. Promote safe and healthy workplaces and work practices.
2. Promote fair wage compensation, employment standards, and effective labour/management relations.
3. Promote safe buildings and equipment for public protection.
4. Continuously improve the service we deliver and improve public and staff satisfaction with the work of the department.
5. Promote fairness for injured workers.

Core Business Functions

- Communications
 - providing education, communications, consultation on legislative and regulatory initiatives, and effective prevention measures
- Effective dispute resolution
 - providing mediation and conciliation services that promote effective workplace relationships, utilizing alternative dispute resolution techniques

- Setting standards
 - working with other jurisdictions and stakeholders to develop effective codes and standards that maximize safety and improve business compliance
- Advice
 - providing advice and assistance to individuals and organizations to assist injured workers in relation to the department's legislative mandate and services
- Legislative enforcement
 - inspecting and investigating workplaces, buildings, and equipment to ensure compliance and enforcement with health, safety, and employment laws

Priorities for 2000–01

Goal 1

Promote safe and healthy workplaces and work practices.

- Revise Occupational Health and Safety regulations so that they have specific review or expiry dates to ensure they are current and continue to meet the needs of today's workplace.
- Improve the flow of information to employers, particularly small business, and reinforce the link between risk management and insurance costs (Workers' Compensation Board).

Goal 2

Promote fair wage compensation, employment standards, and effective labour/management relations.

- Meet the anticipated increased demand for conciliation and grievance mediation as the public sector is restructured and contracts renegotiated.

Goal 3

Promote safe buildings and equipment for public protection.

- Prepare new fire prevention legislation that clarifies the roles and responsibilities of the provincial and municipal levels of government.

Restructure the Public Safety Division to streamline service and reduce red tape.

Goal 4

Continuously improve the service we deliver and improve public and staff satisfaction with the work of the department.

Streamline the administrative processes surrounding agencies, boards, and commissions and lengthen licensing renewal periods.

Goal 5

Promote fairness for injured workers.

- Implement the recommendations of the Select Committee and the Auditor General and work in closer cooperation with the Workers' Compensation Board (WCB), Workers' Compensation Appeals Tribunal (WCAT), and Workers' Advisers Program (WAP) to enhance service provision to injured workers and employers.

Natural Resources



Mission:

To build a better future for Nova Scotians through responsible management of our natural resources.

Strategic Goals

The department will focus on ensuring the sustainable use of our natural resources, in order to provide economic, recreational, and other quality-of-life benefits to Nova Scotians living in both urban and rural areas of the province. Its goals are to

1. Achieve sound natural resources stewardship and sustainable development.
2. Maintain the diversity of the province's natural environment.
3. Enhance the economic base for jobs and incomes in Nova Scotia.
4. Improve the quality of life for Nova Scotians.
5. Ensure the effective use of human and financial resources.

Core Business Functions

- Resource management
 - issuing rights for the use of Crown resources and maintaining inventories of natural resources, including forests, wildlife and their habitats, sites and features of natural or recreational value, Crown land holdings, and mineral and energy resources
- acquiring and disposing of interests in Crown lands; managing forests on Crown land, and encouraging private land owners to practise good forest stewardship
- providing outdoor recreational opportunities in provincial parks
- Resource protection
 - protecting forests from fire, insects, and disease
- Data gathering and analysis
 - collecting, analysing, and interpreting information to provide for good forest management practices and knowledge of wildlife populations, geological resources, and resource use and production technologies
- Legislation and policy development
 - developing and enforcing policies and legislation relating to forest wildlife and habitat, mineral and energy resources, and provincial parks, to ensure they are used sustainably
- Information and technology transfer
 - informing and advising stakeholders on resource availability and use, market and development opportunities, and new technologies

- informing, educating, and consulting with the public on the management and use of natural resources

Priorities for 2000–01

Goal 1

Achieve sound natural resources stewardship and sustainable development.

The department will continue programs designed to maintain the health and sustainability of the province's resource base. These will contribute to rural employment and sustain rural communities and provide health and recreational benefits for everyone.

- Implement amendments to the Forests Act and new regulations to ensure that Nova Scotia's forests are sustainable. These provide for increased silviculture on private lands, better information on harvesting and production levels, and new management practices.
- Initiate and coordinate stewardship agreements with industry and land owners that generate public and private funding for private land silviculture activities.
- Develop updated provincial energy and climate change strategies to guide decisions and actions that affect the future production and use of energy in the province.

- Produce and release a provincial State of the Forest report, and participate in the Canadian report on the Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management.

- Continue to enforce compliance under the Wildlife Act, Beaches Act, Crown Lands Act, Forests Act, Trails Act, Parks Act, Wilderness Protection Act, and Angling Act, among others.

- Monitor wildlife populations to ensure that the principles of conservation and sustainable use are realized, and evaluate the current system for harvesting moose in Cape Breton.

- Complete strategic land use plans for Crown lands using the integrated resource management planning process, and begin developing long-range management plans that conform with these strategic plans.

Goal 2

Maintain diversity of the natural environment.

The department will work to maintain a variety of plants, animals, and other living organisms in all their forms and levels of organization, including genes, species, ecosystems, and the processes that link them together.



- Implement the Nova Scotia Endangered Species Act by initiating recovery plans for endangered and threatened species; support the National Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk by reporting on the status of wildlife in Nova Scotia.
- Monitor forest conditions and threats to the forest (i.e., fire, insects, and disease) and implement suitable strategies to protect the forests.
- Participate in the Eastern Habitat Joint Venture, the Black Duck Joint Venture, and the Sea Duck Joint Venture as part of Nova Scotia's commitment to the North American Waterfowl Management Plan.
- Jointly with Aboriginal Affairs, continue discussions with Mi'kmaq representatives about access to Crown lands for hunting and gathering activities as referenced in the recent court decision concerning treaty rights.
- Encourage appropriate private-sector development of natural resources on Crown lands while ensuring it is done in a responsible and environmentally sound manner that preserves ecological integrity, recreational opportunities, and sustainable resource use. This includes forest harvesting and silviculture, development of peatland and aggregate resources, general recreational activities, and the sale, trade, or acquisition of Crown lands.

Goal 3

Enhance the economic base for jobs and incomes in Nova Scotia.

The department will continue to support responsible development of natural resource based industries by encouraging a competitive business climate supported by effective policies and regulations for the management and use of the province's natural resources.

- Implement multi-disciplinary geoscience programs and undertake targeted promotion of the province's mineral resources.
- Work with officials from the Cape Breton Development Corporation (CBDC), the federal government, and other provincial departments to encourage the continuation of coal mining in Cape Breton as feasible, and to provide for satisfactory remediation of lands affected by coal mining within the boundary of the CBDC lease.
- Work with the federal government to encourage appropriate taxation and expenditure policies that provide a business climate conducive to natural resources industries.

Goal 4

Improve the quality of life for Nova Scotians.

The department will continue to emphasize measures that support communities and citizens.

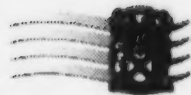
- Initiate a program to reclaim abandoned mine openings on Crown land and provide information and advice on abandoned mines to private land owners.
- In conjunction with the federal government, develop and implement cost-effective energy efficiency and alternative energy programs that help meet Canada's international commitments to reduce greenhouse gases.
- Continue to seek opportunities to partner with a broad range of organizations, agencies and community groups interested in improving outdoor recreational opportunities, nature-based tourism, or conservation.
- Work with the Department of Housing and Municipal Affairs to rationalize and improve the collection of information on non-resident land ownership.

Goal 5

Ensure the effective use of human and financial resources.

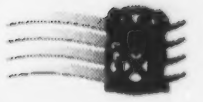
The department will focus on core functions and encourage resource sector industries to move toward self-sufficiency. The department will continue to improve the efficiency of its internal operations and investigate and adopt new ways of doing business in order to provide taxpayers with value for their money.

- Realign its expenditures to maintain efforts devoted to programs that support resource management and sustainable use, while reducing expenditures on administrative and other internal support operations and services where the private sector is able to take the initiative.
- Focus efforts on establishing standards, providing information, and monitoring compliance, recognizing that industry can make its own decisions about the means to reach those standards. The department will maintain direct investment funding to the forest industry and ensure it is used to increase the level of forest management and silviculture activities by the private sector.



- Identify and adopt opportunities where information technology can be used to reduce the cost of doing business or improve client service. This includes expanding the distribution of information by e-mail and on the Internet, and integrating information from various geographic information system databases within the department.
- Identify and implement opportunities for efficiencies and improved service delivery through partnerships with, or purchases from, other departments or the private sector.
- Continue to develop and implement a comprehensive Occupational Health and Safety program to ensure workplaces meet or exceed regulatory requirements and provide a healthy and safe working environment for staff.
- Implement any changes in accordance with contractual agreements, taking into consideration the principles of fairness and equity towards staff. Staff training requirements will be identified and training provided where staff can be reassigned.

Technology and Science Secretariat



Mission:

Working with others, provide leadership for optimizing the enabling effects of technology, information, and science to deliver better government and stimulate economic growth in Nova Scotia.

Strategic Goals

1. Support the government's needs and priorities through technology, information technology, and science.
2. Improve government's efficiency and effectiveness with information technology-based services and strategies.
3. Develop and implement initiatives that improve productivity.
4. Strengthen the government's role as an enabler and facilitator of information technology.

Core Business Functions

- Providing effective and efficient service to the government in the central provision of mainframe computer, e-mail, Internet, telecommunications, and telephone billing services.
- Developing policies, strategies, guidelines, and plans that support the government's interests in technology, information management, and science.
- Expanding the use of technology and science as engines of economic and social growth at both the community and provincial levels.

- Providing the leadership, resources, and coordination necessary to undertake priority information technology projects that meet the business needs of government.

Priorities for 2000-01

Goal 1

Support the government's needs and priorities through technology, information technology, and science.

- Guide development of a strategic planning process to make more government services available electronically.
- Facilitate an update of the government's IT (information technology) Architecture Plan.
- Develop, implement, and monitor information technology standards for the Nova Scotia government.
- Establish a coordinated framework for the review and approval of significant information technology initiatives in government.
- Design and provide the support needed to advance the work of the government's Business and Technology Advisory Committee and the Information Technology Board of Directors.
- Produce the annual IT in Government Report.

Goal 2

Improve government's efficiency and effectiveness with information technology-based services and strategies.

- Provide leadership for a government information management strategy that will include an information policy framework and the implementation of a proposed government e-mail policy, together with guidelines.
- Develop a government telecommunications policy function.
- Promote better management practices in government information technology projects.
- Devise and institute a program for enhanced security of government information.

Goal 3

Develop and implement initiatives that improve productivity.

- Oversee the province-wide institution of trunked mobile radio.
- Produce a policy framework to expand the government's activity in E-commerce.
- Further develop the potential of existing federal-provincial agreements, such as the Community Access Program and the Information Economy Initiative.
- Help ensure government purchases in information technology result in economic spinoffs for the Nova Scotian economy.
- Provide capabilities for asset

management and contract and lease administration for trunked mobile radio within the public sector.

- Take advantage of new information technology and innovation-related initiatives as opportunities arise in the federal-provincial context.

Goal 4

Strengthen the government's role as an enabler and facilitator of information technology.

- Support the government's Information Technology/Human Resources Strategy in partnership with the Department of Human Resources.
- Develop an internal public relations strategy to improve communications and consultation between the secretariat and its clients.
- Measure ongoing client satisfaction and project success.
- Document lessons learned in the course of the secretariat's many enabling and facilitating activities.

Tourism and Culture



Mission:

***To champion the development,
preservation, and promotion
of tourism, culture, and heritage
to stimulate economic growth and
quality of life for the benefit of all
Nova Scotians.***

Strategic Goals

1. In partnership with Nova Scotia's tourism sector, generate economic growth and export revenues through development and marketing of Nova Scotia's tourism industry.
2. In partnership with Nova Scotia's cultural sector, generate economic growth and export revenues through development and marketing of Nova Scotia's cultural industries.
3. In partnership with Nova Scotia's culture and heritage community, encourage and assist Nova Scotians with education, development, and preservation of the arts and of our cultural and natural heritage.
4. Deliver professional and quality corporate support to government through provision of records management and archival programs and protocol services for visiting dignitaries.

Core Business Functions

The Nova Scotia Department of Tourism and Culture's core business falls into the three main functions of economic development, education, and corporate services.

Economic Development

The department works to stimulate economic growth in Nova Scotia's tourism and culture sectors through

- Tourism
 - working with the Tourism Partnership Council and industry to develop and market Nova Scotia as an internationally competitive year-round tourism destination
 - operating nine provincial visitor information centres
 - ensuring the operation of three provincial Signature Resorts
 - managing Check-In, the province's toll-free information and reservation service
 - operating the tourism literature distribution centre
 - providing inspections and licensing of accommodations
 - delivering tourism development programming
 - undertaking tourism research, statistics, and analysis

- Culture

- working with the culture sector to develop and promote economic growth in Nova Scotia's cultural industries
- developing the economic potential of Nova Scotia's heritage and culture products

Education

The department works to preserve and promote Nova Scotia's arts, cultural, and natural heritage through

- Heritage

- collecting, preserving, researching, and interpreting the province's heritage
- operating the provincial museums system
- supporting community museums
- managing preservation and interpretation of provincially significant heritage buildings along with historical, archaeological, and fossil sites

- Culture

- providing support to the Nova Scotia Arts Council and other cultural institutions
- delivering programs to support performing arts, visual arts, crafts and design, and cultural activities

- operating the Nova Scotia Centre for Craft and Design and the Nova Scotia Art Bank

Corporate Services

The department works to deliver high-quality corporate support to government through

- Archives/Records Management

- acquiring, preserving, and providing access to the province's documentary heritage
- managing and preserving government records

Protocol

- providing protocol advice and services to government
- administering logistics for official visits of dignitaries

Priorities for 2000–01

Goal 1

In partnership with Nova Scotia's tourism sector, generate economic growth and export revenues through development and marketing of Nova Scotia's tourism industry.

- Work with the Tourism Partnership Council and industry stakeholders to develop an updated three- to five-year Nova Scotia Tourism Strategy. Focus on integration of annual marketing and product development plans.



- Implement the joint industry/government 2000 Marketing Plan. Highlights of the 2000 Plan include
 - High-impact marketing campaigns will promote Nova Scotia to our core markets (Atlantic Canada, Quebec, Ontario, New England, mid-Atlantic States) as well as markets being developed for the longer term, including Europe and western Canada. The integrated marketing program will employ a mix of advertising, direct mail, Internet marketing, tourism literature, and direct sales activities targeting consumers, travel trade, and travel writers. The 2000 Plan's objective is a 6.5 per cent overall increase in tourism revenues.
 - Marketing partnerships with both the private sector and other government agencies will play a pivotal role in marketing Nova Scotia by providing financial leverage and competitive products, creating a strategic alliance that is more effective in promoting the province as a destination.
 - An extensive tourism literature plan will be the most comprehensive ever initiated, including introduction of a nature and outdoors guide and golf guide developed with sector organizations.
 - Enhanced Internet marketing through the province's tourism marketing website (www.exploreNS.com) will include electronic fulfillment in English, French, and German and on-line reservations integrated with improvements to Check In.
 - There will be expanded activities and increased programming in Maine and market expansion initiatives in Ontario and Quebec.
 - Develop and implement new market-readiness programs to assist in enhancing the competitiveness and quality of Nova Scotia's tourism industry.
 - Facilitate initiatives that assist in extending Nova Scotia's tourism season, such as extended operations at the Amherst and Port Hastings Visitor Information Centres and support for the Celtic Colours International Festival.
 - Streamline the process for licensing and inspection of accommodation properties.
- Goal 2**
- In partnership with Nova Scotia's cultural sector, generate economic growth and export revenues through development and marketing of Nova Scotia's cultural industries.

- Develop and implement a new market-readiness program to assist in enhancing the competitiveness and export potential of Nova Scotia's cultural industries.

Goal 3

In partnership with Nova Scotia's culture and heritage community, encourage and assist Nova Scotians with education, development, and preservation of the arts and of our cultural and natural heritage.

- Work with the cultural and heritage community to implement the Nova Scotia Culture Sector Strategy.
- Revise the Museum Assistance Program to allow more participation by Nova Scotian communities.
- Develop and implement a program to provide strategic support for project-based initiatives at community museums throughout Nova Scotia.
- Develop the economic potential of Nova Scotia's culture and heritage product.
- Adopt the Nova Scotia Highland Village into the provincial museum system to strengthen the Nova Scotia Museum's presence in Cape Breton.

Goal 4

Deliver professional and high-quality corporate support to government through provision of records management and archival programs and protocol services for visiting dignitaries.

- Accelerate the development, approval, and implementation of the STAR/STOR system for the classification, retention, and disposition of government records.
- Complete handbook and update Internet site to provide enhanced protocol services to clients.

Transportation and Public Works



Mission:

To construct, maintain, and manage provincial highways, buildings, and related infrastructure and to provide accommodation and property services in support of sustainable economic growth and social well-being.

Strategic Goals

1. Enhance the value and safety of the transportation system.
2. Manage provincial real property, effectively and efficiently, for government's strategic advantage.
3. Provide the infrastructure and related policies necessary to support economic growth of the province.
4. Provide efficient, cost-effective, and environmentally sound services to address customers' needs.

Core Business Functions

The department consists of four operational areas: District Operations, Specialized Support Services, Real Property, and Industrial Properties. Supporting sections include Policy and Planning, Public Affairs and Communications, Human Resources, Financial Services, and Information Technology. The department's core business functions can be summarized as follows:

- constructing, maintaining, and operating provincial roads, bridges, ferries, buildings, and property
- providing accommodation and property services to provincial government departments and agencies
- providing policy direction to ensure an effective air, rail, and marine transportation system

Priorities for 2000–01

Goal 1

Enhance the value and safety of the transportation system.

- Provide maintenance services for provincial roads, bridges, and ferries; provide snow and ice control on provincial highways.
- Assess Alternative Service Delivery (ASD) as a framework for achieving program objectives, value for money, and more flexibility in the delivery of non-core government services. Areas within the transportation system to be examined for ASD potential include fleet management, road maintenance services, provision of highway signs, and highway design/planning functions.
- Implement tendering for the hauling of winter salt supplies.
- Pursue a cost-sharing agreement with the federal government on the National Highway System in Nova Scotia.

- Continue pre-engineering work for the twinning of Highway 101, from Mount Uniacke to Avonport, and of Highway 125, from North Sydney to Sydney River.
 - Initiate construction work on Highway 101 by upgrading the Mount Uniacke interchange structure.
 - Develop summer and winter performance standards that clearly indicate the expected service levels on all classes of roads.
 - Review current costing methods to ensure they are appropriately allocated and include the true cost of conducting business; true costs will enable the department to compare its service costs with those of the private sector.
 - Provide better planning, costing, and asset history information by completing implementation of the management information system for fleet, building, and highway maintenance.
 - Ensure development, management, and delivery of comprehensive highway safety programs by fulfilling responsibilities identified in the Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Business and Consumer Services.
 - Produce comprehensive, non-partisan, multi-year program information for maintaining and upgrading secondary roads by implementing a Transportation Management Information System.
 - Work to enhance highway safety and education through cooperation with stakeholders, such as trucking associations.
 - Continue development and testing of an integrated Winter Road Condition and Weather Forecasting Information System.
 - Promote the safe operation of private railways under provincial jurisdiction in Nova Scotia by establishing and enforcing regulations.
 - Administer agreements between the province, short-line railways, and Transport Canada for the safe operation of railways.
 - Assist in the development and implementation of a safety management system for short-line railways.
- Goal 2**
Manage provincial real property, effectively and efficiently, for government's best strategic advantage.
- Control lease costs to government through continued implementation of the Provincial Space Allocation Standards.
 - Review all provincial government office buildings with a view to reducing costs by eliminating surplus office space.



- Explore Alternative Service Delivery (ASD) options for various functions within the real property service area.
- Provide a maintenance and service program for provincially owned buildings, addressing such issues as indoor air quality and accessibility, as well as general maintenance and capital improvements.
- Sell Crown-owned properties that are surplus to government requirements.
- Commence a major refurbishment of the Johnston Building, which has reached the end of its economic life.
- Prepare a business case to compare options for providing government premises; this is in response to declining vacancy rates and increasing rental rates in downtown Halifax.
- Coordinate the development of an accessibility policy for government-owned and leased properties.
- Work with key stakeholders to strategically position Nova Scotia and its key ports as a major gateway to North America.
- Continue to assist the Halifax International Airport Authority in its efforts to promote and market the Halifax International Airport as an Atlantic regional asset.
- Work with the federal government and other provinces to develop air access policies that improve service to Nova Scotia.
- Work with business and community leaders to renew and enhance commercial ferry link opportunities to key markets in the northeastern United States.
- Work with local authorities, including Sydney and Yarmouth, to develop an integrated airport marketing plan using an upgraded, world-class Halifax International Airport as the hub.

Goal 3

Provide the infrastructure and related policies necessary to support economic growth of the province.

- Implement or facilitate, in partnership with key stakeholders, relevant elements of a long-range, multi-modal transportation strategy to coordinate activities in the transportation sector.
- Implement changes in provincial intercity bus transport policy to address the future of scheduled and charter bus services in Nova Scotia.
- Commence, in partnership with key stakeholders, a pilot study of highway rest area sites in three strategic locations in the province.
- Work with communities, businesses, and industries to ensure that highways and secondary roads are planned and designed to optimize economic growth.

- Conduct research and development in the areas of asphalt pavements, such as Superpave, and roadside vegetation management to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of products and services.
- Complete and refine a 10-year plan for the upgrading and twinning of 100-series highways.
- Continue to maintain and improve provincial government-owned buildings through completion of contracted work in building construction, renovation, and cost-shared projects.

Goal 4

Provide efficient, cost-effective, and environmentally sound services to address customers' needs.

- Ensure that government's holdings of furniture and equipment (valued at approximately \$320 million) are monitored, verified, and disposed of in an efficient, cost-effective, and environmentally sound manner.
- Continue to meet the needs of various clients with respect to the acquisition of leased premises and the acquisition and disposal of Crown lands.
- Pursue the transfer of golf courses and industrial parks and malls to the appropriate sector, enabling the department to dedicate its resources to core programs and functions.

- Work with key stakeholders as part of the Joint Action Group (JAG) on Environmental Clean-up of the Muggah Creek Watershed community-based process. The process promotes a healthy community by developing effective strategies for the remediation of the site contamination within the boundaries of the project that are socially acceptable, environmentally sound, and economically responsible.
- Continue environmental identification and remediation programs that involve contaminated sites and provincially owned buildings containing regulated materials.
- Improve the quality of pavement projects through the continued implementation of End Product Specification (EPS), a process that places responsibility for quality control on the contractor.
- Continue Energy Audit and Office Space Audit programs to identify inefficiencies, which when minimized will increase the operational efficiency of all government-owned buildings.
- Build on the success of a newly designed public website, which provides Nova Scotians with direct access to the department's services and provides a more efficient means of delivering innovative service.